

HISTORICAL MEMORIAL CENTER

Pennsylvania State Police

Oral History Interview of:

Virginia Smith

INTERVIEWER:

Welcome.

MS. SMITH:

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

This is the Pennsylvania State Police Oral History Project. We're here on June 27, 2006.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

At the Pennsylvania State Police Academy. My name is Shelly Levins (phonetic). I'm here with retired Major Virginia Smith. And thank you for joining us.

MS. SMITH:

Thank you for asking...

INTERVIEWER:

I appreciate -- oh, and this is tape one in our series. So to start off, I'd be interested in knowing a little bit about your background, the year you were born, and where you grew up in Pennsylvania -- or if you grew up in Pennsylvania.

MS. SMITH:

Yes, I did. And I was born in April of 1946, which makes me 60, and I was born in Pittsburgh. I grew up in an area just outside of

Pittsburgh, a suburb called Ross Township. And I spent all of my teen years -- you know, early years and teen years in Ross Township, and graduated from North Hills High School.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And growing up in Pittsburgh, what was that like for you?

MS. SMITH:

Well, like I said, the area we lived in was outside of Pittsburgh, so I wasn't actually in the city.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I was in a pretty rural area actually -- a lot of farm land, and -- you know, as I got older, areas around us started developing, but the house that I lived in was at the end of a dirt road, so -- you know, like I said it was pretty rural. People around us had -- you know, horses, and goats, and -- as a kid I even had a goat for a while. And we had some ducks and we had chickens, dogs and cats, of course. So as far as going to Pittsburgh, I guess on the bus it probably took about 20 minutes or so -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So we went into Pittsburgh mostly for department store type shopping, that -- you know, around our area there were small grocery stores, and neighborhood grocery stores, and things like that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And your high school was also as rural, being really close to where you were living?

MS. SMITH:

I took the bus to high school.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

It was within the North Hills area -- where I lived, but for elementary school and junior high school -- or middle school I guess it's called now, I walked to school. So then after that for -- like I said, senior high then I took the bus.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

In growing up, did you have any contact with the State

Police? Did you know any State Policeman? Were they in your family?

MS. SMITH:

No, no contact whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MS. SMITH:

Probably -- like a lot of people I think, who are from larger city areas -- even though I was in a township, we had our own police department, you just saw most State Police Officers on like the turnpike -- you know, when we were travelling. But really didn't have any contact with any -- you know, in my area.

INTERVIEWER:

Or municipal police for that matter?

MS. SMITH:

Well like I said, my township had their own police department.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Which would have been -- you know, a municipal police department.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

But still didn't really have a lot of contact with them, I mean -- you know, their station was probably about two or three miles where I lived, and so we would pass it maybe going to the supermarket, or something like that. But -- and also going to school, we would pass that station. But -- you know, never really had any contact with them.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And probably back in those days the police weren't as active in community service type things -- you know, I mean I don't recall any police officers ever coming to our school and talking to us about -- you know, about safety, or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, really didn't have any contact with the police.

INTERVIEWER:

How did you find out -- or what kind of -- I guess before how you found out, what interested you about the field of law

enforcement? Like what drew you to deciding to become a State Trooper?

MS. SMITH:

I guess it would be -- you know, you think in your head at least that it's kind of like a helping profession -- you know, and I think most police officers do believe that -- you know, that they're going to be employed -- or in a career where they're going to be helping people. And that was probably something I always -- that I was interested in. Earlier, like maybe in my teens I thought about becoming a nurse, and things like that -- you know. But I had never thought about being a police officer.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I think again, that thinking of it as helping people -- you know, people that are in need. And after finding out about the State Police -- thinking that it would be something that I would like to do.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And how did you find out about the opportunity?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. At the time that I was recruited actually...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

I was working for a car dealer -- he sold new cars, and I was doing title work, and also some of the payroll, and several different jobs.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And a recruiter came to the station where I was working -- to the car dealership where I was working, and was there to talk to the owner's son about becoming a State Police Officer, and the day that the recruiter came in, they owner's son was not there. And I met him, and he started talking to me about it -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And that kind of sparked the interest, I guess -- you know, and then it got to be kind of like a challenge. Like, can you go, and can you pass the written test, and then can you pass the strength and agility test, and can you go for the interview, and things like that. So as it progress -- you know, you just kind of

get more in to it, and -- you know, of course you hope you do well as you -- you know, go through each step.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So when you decided to take -- I guess the written test was first...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...where did you go to take that, and what was that like?

MS. SMITH:

I believe I took it at Schenley High School in Pittsburgh, and I really don't remember a lot about it. I mean, I did well on the test. I think it was -- there was quite a bit of reading comprehension on it -- you know, giving you paragraphs, and asking questions about the paragraphs. That's mainly what I remember about the test. I don't think there was a lot of math, and things like that at that time. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Then after the written test -- then you found out you passed that, what was the next step?

MS. SMITH:

I believe the physical, and the strength and agility test.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Can you describe that?

MS. SMITH:

Well the physical was just -- you know, a physical.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And the strength and agility test was doing push-ups, chin-ups, I think a -- kind of like a broad jump, or a three jump type thing.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I'm trying to think if there was something else included in that. But I remember anyhow -- how ever many different tasks you had to do, you were permitted to fail one of them. Which I did. I failed the push-ups -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, no.

MS. SMITH:

Which I think a lot of women have had problems with because of the upper body strength -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But, after being accepted, and you're -- having your -- basically phys. ed. classes, and your self defense classes. And your being tested over and over on those things that you were first tested on -- you know, you're supposed to improve of course -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So as long as -- even though you failed one thing during the entrance, you had to improve on that and everything else as you went through the Academy. So, I built of the muscles and -- you know, which of course you're doing -- you know, push-ups everyday, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...you're definitely going to improve over the six months that you're here.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Do you remember during that first strength and agility test -- like what the requirements were? Like did you have to do 25 push-ups, or how many were required -- and in the other aspects of the test too, what were the...

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't. I don't really remember. But I know the push-ups -- there weren't a lot. I mean, it could've been as little as five or six, but -- you know, I was only able to do maybe one, or two, or something -- you know, I mean actual push-ups -- you know. And of course, when you're younger -- you're learning about girls push-ups -- you know, and being on your knees, or whatever, rather than being parallel to the floor, and -- you know, pushing up with your arms all together, so -- I know we also had to do sit-ups, and it seems to me that there might have been like 20 some sit-ups in a certain time, but I don't recall...

INTERVIEWER:

It was over...

MS. SMITH:

...what the time was. And with the jumping, there was a certain distance, but I don't recall what that distance was.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But like I said, for me the hardest was the push-ups. And I know we also had to do chin-ups, and I think there was a couple of those, that you had to do. And at that time also, the standards were different for men and women, so women weren't expected to do -- you know, as many as the men did at that time.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. When you're taking this test, are there other men and women taking it at the same time like all around you?

MS. SMITH:

Yes, um-hum -- in the gym. Right.

INTERVIEWER:

That must've been...

MS. SMITH:

You kind of like had -- you know, different stations set up, and you went from one place to the other -- you know, did your chin-ups, or whatever you did first, and then moved on to the sit-ups, and then moved on to the push-ups -- like that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Was this held at the same place, or some place else?

MS. SMITH:

That was held here at the Academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, you had to travel then...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...from the...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- Pittsburgh area.

INTERVIEWER:

...Pittsburgh area to the Academy?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And how soon after you did the test did you find out if you'd passed, or...

MS. SMITH:

I would say it was a couple of months. I -- you know, I really don't recall.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, but I would say it was a couple months.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Because I really don't remember what month we took the test in.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

But I came into the Academy in March. So, I don't recall before that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

How long I'd taken the test before that.

INTERVIEWER:

Once you found out that you'd passed the strength test, and the physical -- oh, by the way, with the physical were there any like height requirements that you can remember, or weight requirements? Any thing that you felt like -- or that the State

Police said that you need to be at this level in order to even pass that section -- do you know, or remember anything about that at all?

MS. SMITH:

There wasn't any height requirement. There was a weight requirement -- and I'm five, seven -- five, seven and a half, and I recall that I could not be over 150 pounds.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, I was -- you know, I didn't have to work on the weight at that time.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Okay.

MS. SMITH:

But, it was just prior to that actually -- because of the Consent Decree, I believe that the height requirement had been done away with -- you know, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

So that they were able to hire and recruit more women, and more minorities.

INTERVIEWER:

Exactly. Because women -- I mean, having a height requirement for women would be difficult.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

A lot of women are shorter than men.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I just -- I think maybe five, six is like the average...

MS. SMITH:

Right.

INTERVIEWER:

...for a woman today.

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right. And there are some minorities that -- you know, generally are shorter in stature also -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Okay, after you passed this physical, and the strength test, what came next?

MS. SMITH:

I believe there was an interview, but I really don't recall a lot about it, because I've taken -- had so many interviews, I...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...I really don't remember.

INTERVIEWER:

But do you think you had to come back again to the Academy for that as well?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I think it was a separate date -- I don't think it was the same day as the physical and the strength and agility test -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I came with a friend that I had met in Pittsburgh, and he and I drove back and forth together, for the testing and after we go into the Academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

I think there ended up being like four of us that -- in the Pittsburgh area that -- you know, were accepted at the same time.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That got together and traveled -- you know, together back and for the all the time.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, that's convenient.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, that did help.

INTERVIEWER:

Neat -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Now, as you're applying, and going through this whole process, what does your family, and what do your friends think about this? Can you describe that?

MS. SMITH:

My family -- it were -- they were excited. Kind of not believing that I was actually going to go through with it and to it -- in family, I'm talking mainly about my mother and my brother.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then I also had two children, and they were excited, of course.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Didn't want me to leave home, but at the time that I got accepted, and I started making plans, then my mother ended up staying with the children in Pittsburgh, during the time that I was in the Academy. Friends were totally not believing, because -- mainly because I was pretty quiet, and they didn't think that it was the type of job that I would be suitable for, because I wasn't very aggressive, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But, I guess -- you know, the training helps, plus there's something down in there that you can pull out...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...when it's necessary, and be the aggressive person that you have to be -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean -- you know, the circumstances and the situations are going to be different than things that you might have dealt with in your everyday life. So that there was never a need to be that aggressive, or to be that pushy, or to -- you know, have to take control or command over people -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

With friends and family they kind of just -- maybe go along with what you want to do, rather than you having to urge them, or push them to do things, so...

INTERVIEWER:

That's true. So they just never saw that side of you?

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right. Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Also -- I mean being that type of person, you must have seen in what the recruiter had said, and what you knew about the State Police, that there was another side to the State Police -- other jobs, other than these aggressive positions that you think of the State Police taking on. I mean, did you know about the wide spectrum of jobs that were available in the State Police career at the time?

MS. SMITH:

Well, he did talk to me about it, but of course, he also pointed out the fact that as a new Trooper, you're going to start out on patrol -- you know, and you can expect to be doing that for a while. Also, that you were stationed outside of your home area, and that you had to do that -- I believe at that time it was four years, before you were permitted to go back to -- you know, your home Troop.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, even though he -- you know, may have talked about other positions, he made it very clear that -- you know, everyone basically was starting out on patrol.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So at that point, I don't think it crossed my mind about going into anything else -- you know, you just kind of knew what you were going to be doing -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- yeah. So you entered the Academy in March of 1975?

MS. SMITH:

Yes -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And can you tell me, if you can remember what your expectations were of the Academy, before you entered? Did they give you any indication of what Academy training would be like?

MS. SMITH:

I think there was an indication of what the training would be like. I don't think there was an indication of what the -- maybe the

environment -- I don't know if that's a good word to use. But the environment would be like -- about the discipline -- I guess the military aspect of it. I think males who had been previously in the military probably had more realistic expectations of what the Academy would be like, and the semi -- or quasi-military type life...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...then most of the women did -- you know, or the other men who had never been in the military. So I think that was probably the biggest shock -- I mean I knew about the classroom training, and things like that, and as far as the physical, and self defense, and learning to shoot, and things like that. But I guess -- like I said -- you know, I wasn't prepared for the military type training and the saluting and things like that -- you know, that was kind of...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...different.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. How did you get yourself acclimated to that environment. I mean obviously it's a shock for the first day, and then -- how did you just figure out how to deal with that atmosphere?

MS. SMITH:

I don't know. I mean, I guess having other women there to talk to probably helped -- you know, and even some of the guys that were -- you know, in my class, and people telling you -- even though sometimes you wanted to quit, and I think a lot of us wanted to quit at one time or another during that six months -- you know, people say, "Well just hang in there -- you know, it's going to get better," and, "Just get through this part," and, "You can do that" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And the camaraderie, and just being able to talk with each other, and family support, and things like that -- you know, and I guess maybe I'm fairly adaptable, because of -- if I look back at -- you know, how many stations I've been to, and transfers that I've had throughout my career -- you know, like I said, I guess I can say I'm pretty adaptable, and was just able to adapt to the situation. And -- you know, there were probably times that you didn't like

what was going on, or -- you know, you learn to kind of like bite your lip sometimes, and -- you know, not act out even though you're angry or upset about something that's going on.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Can you describe the demographic of the other cadets in your class? Like how many of them were there -- how many men, how many women, that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

I believe we started out with about 150.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MS. SMITH:

And there were seven women in the class. And I had a roommate, who left after several weeks.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

She decided -- you know, she didn't want to stay and she left. So I ended up being alone, as far as not -- you know, having a roommate, where other people had roommates, so -- sometimes

that was difficult too, because everybody kind of started to bond...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and you had chores, and so -- you know, some of my chores I ended up doing by myself in my room, rather than having somebody else to help me wax the floor, or whatever the chore might be. But -- you know, we all got along well, and as far as -- you know, the things that had to be done in the common areas of our dorm, and things like that were -- you know, able to work together and do those things. Again, like I said, I think there was like 150, and I believe the class was half minorities, and half non-minorities. And again, this was because we were the first class after the Consent Decree had been signed.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

All right. Now with these seven -- and then six women, you were separated I assume, right? From the men's dorms?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

And how did that work?

MS. SMITH:

Just a separate -- you know, area.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And you mentioned before that there were four of you that came from Pittsburgh.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Were those three other men?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, they were men.

INTERVIEWER:

And did you become close with them over the course of the training?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, I did. The one Trooper who did most of the driving back and forth actually -- I had known his sister prior to meeting him.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And that was how I ended up meeting him, and knowing that he was coming to the Police Academy, because I knew his sister. And when I talked to her and told her about it, she said, "Oh, I can't believe it" -- you know, "My brother's also going." And so then we contacted each other -- or got in contact with each other, and then he talked to the other people that rode with us -- you know, about wanted to ride. So, I stayed in contact with him pretty much -- you know, always -- you know, and throughout my career, or -- you know, seeing him at different times. Now I haven't talked to him in several years now, since we've both retired, and he from what I understand still lives in Pittsburgh.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So -- you know, I don't talk to him -- but, yeah we became friends.

INTERVIEWER:

Good. Out of the 150 -- well, we know one left, so 149, how many actually graduated? How many ended up dropping out -- how many was that?

MS. SMITH:

I believe it was about 143.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

That ended up graduating, I'm not sure. But several people left, some people were dismissed for different -- you know, violations, and activities that they shouldn't have been involved in. So I think, like I said there was about 143. And five of the women graduated.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Because there was another women that left prior to graduation.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now what sorts of things -- and you described a couple of your chores, waxing your floor, and keeping your common areas clean, and that sort of thing, but can you describe other sorts of duties that you had while you were in training?

MS. SMITH:

Everyone had duty working in the cafeteria -- you know, dishwashing, and things like that, or cleaning the tables. We also worked down in the stables, taking care of the horses, and so you -- you know, shoveled hay, and fixed the stables for the horses, and cleaned the horses, and brushed them, and did that kind of stuff. And mostly, like I said, inside of the Academy it was just keeping it clean, not only in your dorm, but the library, and -- you know, like I said, doing the floors -- buffing the floors and working in the cafeteria. So those were the main type of jobs that we had.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And as far as the training is concerned, what were the different aspects of training? I know you talked about -- we know the main categories would be like physical training, then classroom training, and then like weapons training...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But can you go into a little bit more detail?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. As far as the classroom training, we had of course, criminal law and traffic law. Also at that time we were taking classes through Penn State. So someone from Penn State came in and taught English, sociology, speech, and there was something else -- might have been psychology...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...I believe it was. So we were also taking those classes, in addition to -- you know, criminal law and traffic law. And...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you get credits for those?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, we did.

INTERVIEWER:

That...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah -- and I'm trying to think were there any other -- oh, and of course, including in criminal law -- would be like criminal procedure -- things like that. And just overall -- you know, learning about the judicial system, learning about magisterial districts, and things like that -- learning report writing. We also did spelling, because they thought it was really important that we know how to spell, so we had spelling tests I believe every week, or something -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Hard words?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I've always been a decent speller, so I can't say the words were hard. But some people did struggle with them -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And some people don't -- you know, I mean they can speak well, or whatever -- you know, but their just not good at spelling.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So there were some that did struggle with the spelling, but overall, like I said, I don't think that they were really tough words, but words -- I'm sure words that they thought that you would use most often, like Pennsylvania -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Or something like that -- or magistrate, or judicial -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Things -- those types of words -- summons or subpoena -- you know, words that you would use often as a Trooper.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And doing accident reports, we -- you know, did accident reports. Learning to write -- of course, citations, learning about search warrants, when -- you know, when you can apply for a search warrant, what information you have to have, what hours are a

search warrant good -- you know, those types of things. And I -- if I recall correctly, I think we did like some type of quiz every Friday -- you know, we'd have a quiz on something. And so I -- you know, the class work wasn't bad really.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

For me the physical thing was harder than the class work. I hated to run -- I still hate to run. And by the time we were running like three miles, I was like, "Oh" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, like...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. But...

INTERVIEWER:

Where did you...

MS. SMITH:

...and we got through it.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Where did you run when you went?

MS. SMITH:

I know we used to run over towards a cemetery. I'm not really sure where it's located at now from here.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But we'd leave here, and go down either the front hill, or the back hill, and run up around the cemetery and back, and then come up one of the hills, and we used to do leap frog up the hills, and at some point run up backwards up part of the hill -- you know, and things like that, and -- and I think we started out probably running no more than like a quarter of a mile or so, or a half a mile, just right up around here and around the circle and things like that -- you know, and then progressively got to the point where at the end we were running the three miles.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So did you feel yourself getting stronger?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Yeah -- you know, like I said, since I had failed the push-ups to begin with -- you know, and wasn't able to do four, or whatever the minimum was at that time -- you know, and then -- you know, going through -- and I think graduating and being able to do like 25, so -- you know, you feel

the strength, and -- you know, lost a lot of weight -- which I haven't been able to do since, but of course that's probably from that running, which I hate to do. But, the physical things were -- oh, I was going to say self defense -- you know, we did self defense learning. One on one self defense, and take down holds, and things like that -- you know, and learning about having to unarm someone, or being able to take someone down, and searches, and all that was part of our physical education too. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now, I'm going to hope and assume that the classroom training was the same as the men, but you had mentioned before that in testing to get into the State Police, it was different than the men for your physical standards.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did it stay different in the Academy? Or did you feel like you were doing the same physical training as the men as well?

MS. SMITH:

The testing that we had to enter...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...that stayed different. I mean you were still expected to progress -- like I said, if I went from doing less than four push-ups, to being able to do 25, that may have been what the requirement was to graduate.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

You know...

INTERVIEWER:

Just to do better.

MS. SMITH:

To do better, but there was a certain number...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, there was? Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And I really don't remember what that number was. But as far as the other training, like the self defense training and things like that, there wasn't any difference. There was only a difference in those entry level things -- you know, that you were expected to progress on those. But as far as learning self defense, and -- we had boxing class, and things like that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

The women participated with the men, because you had -- we were in platoons, so you participated with your platoon in the physical education part of it. And so you boxed -- you know, with the men that were in your class.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And wrestled, and -- you know, like I said, learned different take downs, and -- you know, how to make an arrest, and things like that, and how to handcuff someone. And of course, everyone's not going to want to be handcuffed, so -- you know, learning that. So you were practicing with the men in your class on those things.

INTERVIEWER:

How was that -- you know, having to box against a man? Did you feel like you're at someone of a disadvantage, or did you hold your own?

MS. SMITH:

I think most of us held our own.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, nobody was out really to injure you -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...as far as the men were concerned. But I can remember one time, and -- I don't think this was boxing, we were doing some other kind of wrestling thing, or take downs, or something, and one of the male cadets had me down on the floor. And I'm laying there, and I'm like, "I can't get up -- I can't get up" -- you know, and the instructor at that time said, "You can" -- you know, "You can get up -- now what are you going to do?" You know -- and I hate to say this, but the way he was laying, he had his legs kind of like open -- you know, so I took my fist, and I kind of just went

-- you know, down between his legs, well -- I mean it definitely got -- you know, he let me up -- you know, but then you kind of feel bad, because I mean it was just practice, but in a real situation -- you know, you can't think about, "Well, is this going to hurt this person, or is" -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...is this going to hurt this guy -- you know, but -- you know, and the cadet was of course like, "I can't believe you did that -- I can't believe you did that," but the instructor was going to just let me lay there until I figured out -- you know, how I could get up, and he -- you know, had me pinned down, and that was the only thing I could think of, so -- and it' worked, so...

INTERVIEWER:

It worked -- yeah...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Like a real life scenario?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Huh.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

What other types of -- I mean speaking of like real life scenarios, what other types of play acting did you do in different situations, to help prepare you for things that would happen in the field?

MS. SMITH:

Searching buildings, which is -- can be a scary thing -- you know, when you're going into a building, and not knowing if someone's in there, or where they are in there if they are -- you know, if there is somewhere there, where they are -- so we did that. I believe we did like barricaded gunmen type things -- you know, where someone would be behind a building, or behind something -- you know, and how you go about handling those type of situations. And I think mostly -- you know, like I said, it was relative to arresting -- arrest procedures, and -- you know,

how to safely make an arrest, how to safely stop a car, how to park -- you know, when you stop a car, and how to approach -- so a lot of it dealt with -- you know, safety issues -- you know. And of course that's what -- we wanted to be safe, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah. And with the weapons training -- first of all, what type of weapon did you train with?

MS. SMITH:

I believe we started out with a .38 revolver.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

That was the first weapon that we had. And we had two -- and I can't remember whether both men and women had two or not, but the women I know had both a -- I believe six inch revolver, and a two inch revolver. And I -- like I said, right now I don't recall whether the men did that also or not, or whether the women just had it because you were able to carry it in your purse...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and so you could have both weapons, and you can use it as an off duty weapon also.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

So you were still issued the snubbed nose revolver...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...that's interesting. Because I know that they were giving that in '72...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...in the first year that women came on.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Good. That's neat. And had you ever fired a weapon before you came to the Academy?

MS. SMITH:

A couple times, just out with some cousins and relatives -- you know, just out shooting in the woods type things...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but never with any accuracy, first of all -- you know, and just a rifle -- I'd never -- I don't think I had ever shot a revolver or a pistol of any kind.

INTERVIEWER:

So how was the training for you? Did you find that you excelled in it, or what was it like?

MS. SMITH:

No, I didn't excel. I struggled...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...with the shooting. And pretty much did forever -- you know, I'm not sure why. There were times when I would be really good, but there were times when I would be really bad, so because of that I guess I was never able to really establish what my problem was -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But -- and as we changed to different weapons, there were other problems -- you know, maybe my -- the size of my hands, or the kick from the gun, or -- different problems that -- you know, arose. And probably on my part, was not practicing -- you know, not practicing in between qualifications -- you know, just want to go out once a year, twice a year -- whatever it was at the time, and go shoot and never -- you know, whereas I think a lot of people were into shooting -- you know, so they went out throughout the year and -- you know, did more shooting than I did, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Perhaps -- I mean at least I know for me, when I don't excel at something, I'm not necessarily inclined to do it all that often.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think that was probably the same -- in that situation?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, that could've been -- yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And in your -- I mean we'll talk more about this later, but I'm just curious now, as to whether you ever had the situation to draw your weapon while you were on duty as a Trooper?

MS. SMITH:

A couple of times.

INTERVIEWER:

Really -- wow.

MS. SMITH:

A couple of times -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you talk about those? I know we're jumping ahead, but I'm just wondering about that too.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. One time was a search of a building...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...or I -- search -- it was probably two times for searches of buildings, one a house, and one like a warehouse type thing.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Where I -- the house I recall, I went in with a Trooper, and I don't recall what the incident was, but we were searching the house for a man -- and I can't remember whether it was a domestic -- because it was at a house, I'm kind of thinking that it was -- that it had been -- you know, a domestic type incident that had gone on.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And we were looking for him. And I had my weapon out as we searched the house for him. And we did find him down in the basement of the house -- you know. And then -- like I said, at -- I believe a car stop or two -- you know, where they were like

felony stops, where the people were suspected of -- you know, some type of felony, and weapons were drawn at that time. And also, I can recall a search of a warehouse, and having my weapon drawn out for that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Was there ever an occasion to fire?

MS. SMITH:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

No. Thank goodness there wasn't.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Right. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

As you're -- like in these felony cases, where you're pulling someone over, are you approaching the car with your weapon

drawn, or is it that you are -- just have your hand on it, and then when you get closer to the car -- how -- what is the process of that?

MS. SMITH:

Well at that time that I recall, for us...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...for me and then Troopers that I was with at that time, we had our weapons drawn at the time we approached the vehicle.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And the suspects were still in the car -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...as we approached. And then we got them out of the car, and had them down on the ground -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, wow.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

Now in all of these cases that you've described, did you feel that your Academy training really helped to move you through that, or did you almost feel like it was more your experience up to that point, and your on the job training that helped you with that?

MS. SMITH:

That's a good question. I would say probably both -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

The car stops that I was just talking about -- the ones that I was talking about in particular, I was in Uniontown at the time, and so at that time I was at least four years on the job. The searches were when I was younger on the job...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and stationed in Franklin. So I would think with those, a lot of it was more the Academy training, whereas by the time I had gotten to Uniontown -- you know, and like I said, had been on the job for four years, it had gotten to be -- you know, a lot of experience also -- or I guess you can't say a lot of experience,

but -- you know, relying more on experience probably than Academy training.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And also, the fact that Uniontown itself was a busy station, so you had a wide variety of incidents, and so -- you know, you probably got experience faster than someone who was at a station that -- you know, didn't have as high rate of crime, or as high rate of incidents as we did there.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- true. Well, getting back to the Academy -- and I'm sorry to have strayed from it -- but, I'd like to get kind of an overall sense from you on not only just your overall viewpoint of your Academy training, but how you felt you were treated as a woman and as an African American woman, coming into the Academy when not only were there not very many women, but up to that point, not very many African Americans on the job. Can you talk about that a little bit?

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall really having any particular problems as a result of being a woman, or being black.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I think -- you know, there were still prejudices, but I think most of the Academy staff worked at not letting those prejudices show, or -- knew that they were here to do a job, and didn't -- you know, who it was, that they were going to do the best that they could -- you know, there were some comments made sometimes, and -- you know, you kind of get upset about that, and -- again though -- you know, you kind of just go on and say, "Hey" -- you know, "I'm not going to let certain things bother me," and that -- and let me clarify too, that that was more towards being a woman, than it was towards being black -- you know, the comments that were made, or that I heard.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, like I said, I think the Academy staff as a whole, tried to -- you know, treat everybody the same -- you know, have

everybody to the same thing -- same job -- you know, and prepare you to go out and be a Trooper -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. As far as the other cadets were concerned, you talked a little bit about the Academy staff, but on that end, how did your male cadets treat you as a woman Trooper? Did they -- did you feel like they were treating you the same as their other male counterparts?

MS. SMITH:

I think overall I did.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall -- you know, having any particular problems with any of the male cadets. Now like I said, with having such a large number, we were broken up into platoons. And I can't recall now how many were in my platoon, but we were in alphabetical order, so I was in the last platoon -- the fourth platoon, and so -- you know, you got to know those people in your platoon a lot better than you did the other people -- you know, because you really weren't interacting with them a lot. Your platoon -- you did -- you know, had your classes with, did your physical education things

with, ran with -- you know, so on and so forth. So if there were any prejudices from someone in the first platoon or whatever, I didn't know about them -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

But again, I don't recall women who were in those other platoons saying anything either, about any of the cadets -- you know, giving them a hard time because they were women -- you know, yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

That's good to hear, I mean...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...it seems like...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And during this whole time at the -- now, I guess we should probably clarify how long you were at the Academy, is it six months?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. We went in -- in March, and we graduated in August.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay -- right. During that time period, how often were you able to see your family and especially your kids?

MS. SMITH:

Okay, well like I said, we were divided into platoons, so each week one platoon had to stay. So I went home three weekends out of the month -- you know, and then had to stay one a month -- and sometimes if someone had a problem, like say a disciplinary problem -- a cadet -- you know, they might be restricted for one of their weekends. Now that never happened to me.

INTERVIEWER:

Really...

MS. SMITH:

No. I behaved fairly well, I guess. And as far as I can recall, I don't think I was restricted any weekends for -- because you could also be restricted like for failing -- you know, a test or -- you

know, not passing something, or again on the strength and agility, or on the physicals I think. And you would stay here and work on those areas that you had problems with. But as far as I can recall now, I don't think that I had to stay any extra weekends, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MS. SMITH:

So I got to go home the three weekends a month -- you know, and it was tough. It was tough for the kids, and even now -- you know, I've thanked them numerous times -- you know, and my mother, for watching the children during the time that I was in the Academy. And even after getting out -- you know, it was hard for them. They've moved a couple times, and -- but -- you know, they were pretty adaptable, and -- you know, everything turned out well as far as -- you know, the areas that we moved to, and the kids getting in school, and -- you know, doing well in school, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Okay. One thing that we didn't touch on -- I know you'd mentioned the caring for the horses.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Had you -- now you said you had a goat...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But did you have horses, or...

MS. SMITH:

No, we didn't have horses, but there were people in the area that did.

INTERVIEWER:

That did -- right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So you had some experience with them?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah -- not a lot, I mean -- you know, like I said, they were neighbors. I didn't do -- you know go out and do a lot of riding, or anything but -- you know, as far as not having a fear of them, because some people -- you know, are afraid of horses, and -- you know, they think they're so big, and -- you know, so I

didn't have that -- you know, to have to contend with, as far as the horses.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you enjoy that aspect of it...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I liked to ride.

INTERVIEWER:

...in your training?

MS. SMITH:

And I still like to ride, so -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay -- good.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I guess -- in August you graduated...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and one thing was that in 1923, Lynn Adams required all graduates of the Academy to recite the Call of Honor...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...so you had to recite the Call of Honor obviously...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...when you graduated, and I'm wondering if you may be able to...

MS. SMITH:

Mm-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...recite it today -- if you'd like to make an attempt at it.

MS. SMITH:

No -- "I am a Pennsylvania State Police Trooper, a soldier of the law." "To me is entrusted the honor of the force." "I will serve honestly and faithfully, and put down my life, as others have done before me, rather than swerve from the path of duty." And that's all I can think of right now.

INTERVIEWER:

That's good. That's good. So, on...

MS. SMITH:

But how right? I was getting -- how right?

INTERVIEWER:

...on graduation day, can you describe that experience, and what that was like -- who came from your family, and that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. You know it's kind of a blur, to tell you the truth. I guess - - you know, you're just so glad to be finished, and after six months, and -- I believe my mother and my brother came, and -- like I said, you're just glad it's over -- you know, and you're anxious to find out about your new station, and just...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...wanting to -- you know, get started and say, "Hey, okay I'm ready to go" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. I guess -- I also forgot to ask you -- do you remember who was the Director of the Academy? Or maybe you could

name some of the instructors at the time -- or ones that stand out in your mind that particularly influenced you, or were -- you know, really good?

MS. SMITH:

Okay, influenced me -- well, I can tell you who some of the people were -- Barry Sparks (phonetic), was in phys. ed. We had a Corporal Lynch (phonetic), he was also -- no, he taught -- I believe he taught either criminal or traffic law, I don't remember now. Reagan (phonetic) he was a Sergeant at the time. He was our phys. ed. instructor. I really -- maybe I'll think about it and come back to it...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but I really can't think of names right now.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Okay. When did you find out where you would be headed -- where ever you would be stationed?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that before you graduated?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, it was before...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

...before we graduated. I can't remember now exactly how long.

I don't think it was too long before.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I -- yeah, a short time before we graduated we found
out where we were going.

INTERVIEWER:

And that place was?

MS. SMITH:

Troop "E", Erie. But I went to Franklin Station, so -- I mean, and
-- you know, at first I was like -- you know, not to happy...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...but in relationship to Pittsburgh -- you know, it really wasn't that bad. I mean, Franklin was about, I guess 60 miles north of Pittsburgh, maybe a little further.

INTERVIEWER:

Could've been worse.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, it could've been worse. So -- and like I said -- you know, you weren't permitted to be stationed at your home Troop, which would've been -- you know, nice. But -- so Franklin wasn't really too far out of the way. It was just -- even though I was from kind of a rural, suburban type area, Franklin was very rural, and so that was -- you know, a small town -- Franklin. And Oil City, and Titusville -- you know, small towns that I wasn't really used to, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

A lot of farm land, and a lot of touristy (phonetic) -- tourist or vacationing type areas, down along the river, and things like that -- you know, so there were -- a lot of people had hunting cabins, and things like that, so I wasn't really used to that, but...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Was there anyone else from your class that was stationed either in Troop "E", or at Franklin with you?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. There was someone stationed with me, Trooper Robinson (phonetic), was stationed there at the same time that I was. So we were the first two black Troopers to be at that station. There had been a woman there prior to me, and she had since transferred -- I believe to like Erie, or Meadville, within the same Troop. So we were a phenomena, to be -- you know, and I used to joke that I think sometimes I caused more accidents than I prevented, because -- you know, as you're driving down the street -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

People are doing double takes...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, and -- you know, and showing their kids, and a look -- you know, and that kind of stuff -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Wow -- weird.

MS. SMITH:

...so we're -- you know, going into a restaurant -- you know, someone always had to come over and -- you know, say

something, or -- you know, and I don't mean, mean things -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...but just, "Oh" -- you know, "Where'd you come from?" Or -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...hear, "I didn't" -- you know, "I didn't know we had any women here," or whatever -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

I guess at that small town, it's not like you can go unnoticed?

MS. SMITH:

Right. Well, the City of Franklin itself had their own police department.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

As did Oil City. But all the townships basically around the area -- a couple may have had some part-time police departments, that worked a few hours -- you know, or they would take the night

shift, and we would have the day shift, or vice-versa, so -- like I said, it was very -- you know, rural. And so the people -- you know, even though they were used to State Police Officers, which -- like I said, I was not used to as a kid -- hadn't -- you know, come in contact with -- you know, minority or female police officers prior to that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

When you arrived at Troop "E", Franklin...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...how were you received? You and Trooper Robinson -- right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Yeah -- I don't think we had any particular problems -- you know, as far as the guys at the station.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

There was -- as far as people -- let me say this -- as

far as the way the way they treated you on an everyday basis -- now for me, I did have a male Trooper who would not ride with me, as far as like midnight patrol. And it was kind of funny, because we were in platoons again, and say -- i don't recall, but say there were seven people in a platoon, and you had one person who if you worked midnight's would work the desk, and then you had the other two people -- other six people basically working in pairs. And so, he would not -- you know, ride with me.

INTERVIEWER:

Why do you think that he...

MS. SMITH:

I'm not sure. Couple different things -- somebody said his wife didn't want him to -- you know, other people said -- you know, he just didn't want to, so -- I'm really not sure what the -- you know, what the truthful answer to that is, but...

INTERVIEWER:

And you didn't...

MS. SMITH:

...I was going to say -- what was funny about it, and ironic about it was the fact that because he wouldn't ride with me, that made the other guys ride with him more often, right -- you know, so

their saying to me, "Oh, you're the lucky one" -- you know,
"You're getting out of riding with him" -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Because they didn't want to ride with him...

MS. SMITH:

..."You're the one that's get" -- yeah, "You're the one that's
getting the break" -- you know, so it worked out good. But I have
to say though, before I left there, after those four years, he and I
did -- you know, become partners numerous times.

INTERVIEWER:

Really.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

You patched things up?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Now it's my understanding that when cadets graduate, go in to
the field, and their brand new Troopers in the field at their station
they have a coach.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that your experience?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

And can you talk about that a little?

MS. SMITH:

Yes, I did have a coach, and his name was Walter Anderson
(phonetic).

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And he was -- I thought he was a good coach. He I think had a perception of what he thought women should do. I mean -- you know, I don't know if that's the way to describe it or not. I mean he wanted me to be tough -- you know, and he -- like knocking on a door -- you know, I mean you go up, and you knock on a door -- you know, but he was the -- bang, bang, bang type -- you know, so that's what he wanted me to do -- you know, "Okay, if we're going to knock on this door, we're going to bang, bang, bang on this door," or things like that -- you know, but...

INTERVIEWER:

So scare the people inside, right?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. So -- like I said, I think as a coach he was a good coach. And he was patient, took his time -- you know, I mean -- and even though you're new, and you're a trainee -- I guess you want to call it -- I mean you're still an adult -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and so -- I mean -- you know, I wasn't going to take -- and I'm sure most cadets would not take being treated like a child -- you know, I mean you're -- you know, you're hear to help me, and teach me, and -- you know, help me out. But -- you know, again, I'm not going to stand being treated like a child, so -- I mean we got along well, and -- you know, after the coach period, he was also in my platoon, so I worked midnight's with him several times -- you know, more than several -- but I also worked midnight's with him, so...

INTERVIEWER:

How long was the coach period?

MS. SMITH:

I believe it was 60 days.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I'm not sure whether it was 30 or 60. Because I know somewhere along the line it changed -- you know, the training period was 60 days. But I'm not sure now whether I had 30 or 60.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know -- and then even if you do start out with the 30, if there's -- you know, a necessity to go longer -- you know, it could be extended, but...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- but I'm really not sure now how long it was.

INTERVIEWER:

Would you just patrol with him, or would he also like oversee your reports and all that stuff?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, he did.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Particularly -- you know, after you -- the thing is, the reports really aren't that difficult. I mean, after you get into kind of like a groove -- for lack of a better word -- of doing them, they're basically the same -- you know, the names, and places, and things change -- you know, the situations change, but you basically have a format, that you're going to start out by saying, "This occurred in such and such a way." "This is where it happened." "These are the people involved," so on and so forth. So, doing reports really -- you know, isn't a difficult thing to do. It's just -- you know, just getting into the habit of doing them a certain way. And I mean you have a form that you're doing them on, so you're filling in the blocks a lot of it also -- you know, and then you have a narrative to do. So, like I said, that's not real difficult. But -- you know, he would -- you know, look over things, and say -- you know, "This is good," or -- you know, "I would

change such and such," or "Your scale is a little off" -- you know, on maybe drawing a diagram, or something like that, or...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

... "You forgot to put in that this is north," or something -- you know, and also -- you know, just help -- again with citations, and maybe going to a magistrate's office and filing charges against someone, and things like that -- you know, making sure that you're doing that properly, helping you get ready for any type of testimony that you might have to give for a hearing, and -- you know, telling you what to be aware of and -- you know, maybe sometimes alerting you to different attorneys that may be defending the person, or -- you know, this person's real -- you know, sharp, or not, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

Now -- I lost my train for a minute -- I guess -- right, what I wanted to get at, was the very first time that you went out on patrol -- like the very first time was -- do you remember that time, and were you nervous, or did anything happen?

MS. SMITH:

I don't remember the first time.

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MS. SMITH:

No. But -- you know, I mean I would think that you're going to be nervous.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

A big thing to is you have such a large area to patrol, and getting lost is always a thing -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Because you're not familiar with the area.

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right. You know...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you have maps that you had to study?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, you had maps. And you're assigned a zone to work in, so the county that you're working in may have six zones, and you're going to be assigned to one of those six zones, and it may cover two townships, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, even though you have a map -- you know, people give directions sometimes that really don't help. Particularly people who have lived in an area a long time, because they like to give directions by old landmarks, and things like that -- you know, so -- you know, they'll say, "Go down the road, and turn at -- where John Brown's barn used to be" -- you know, well that was like 35 years ago -- you know, and the barn's no longer there, so you have no indication of where you're going -- you know, but -- so you know, I would think that I would've been nervous, and -- you know, a little apprehensive about -- and like I said -- and particularly when you think about going to a call that's kind of emergency in nature -- you know, and those kinds of things, of course you worry about, "Am I going to be able to find the house right away?" Or -- you know, if there's an accident, and you

know the people are injured and things -- you know, can I find it -
- you know, get there as soon as I can -- you know, and what
problems am I going to have -- you know, as far as location. But
of course, we've had police communication operators, who were
-- you know, familiar with the area, and -- you know, to help
guide you along sometimes -- you know, but...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, they could help you.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was there ever a worry -- and my personal worry would be,
"Gosh" -- you know, "What if I have to administer like sorts of first
aid," or like, "What kind of a situation am I going to have to deal
with physically," and that sort of thing.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you ever come across that in your very early days on the
job? Were you really tested -- you know?

MS. SMITH:

No, not really.

INTERVIEWER:

No...

MS. SMITH:

Not -- nothing -- not really anything serious -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, of course it's serious if it's a fatal, but at the same time, you don't really have to do anything -- you know, as far as -- you know, treating anyone. But as far as bad injuries, that I had to actually like give CPR, or anything like that, no.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

No, I didn't have any in the early days.

INTERVIEWER:

The first time that you had to respond to a fatal car accident, what was that like for you?

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall the first, but I can tell you that as far as responding to fatals, sometimes it's almost surreal -- you know. And I don't know if other people have felt that way, or that's a defense

mechanism of my own -- you know, that you try to be really impersonal about it. And that's not only for fatal accidents, but that's been for suicides, or deaths, or whatever -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...that you kind of have to stand back and not get real involved, or think, "Oh, this poor person," or whatever -- you know. So it's hard, but I'm sure again, as you go on -- you know, you kind of build up that tougher skin, that -- you know, you can't be really emotional about each accident that you see, or each suicide, or each death -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you feel like initially -- you know, before you built up that skin, that there was a network within your Troop, and within your Station -- people that you could talk to about -- you know, this happened today, and this is on my mind kind of a thing? Did you feel like that was there for you? Or even that you needed it?

MS. SMITH:

I think we did in kind of an informal way. There wasn't like the peer contact type thing, or anything like that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know everybody -- not everybody, but a lot of people went out drinking -- you know, after work and things like that, or you sat down -- or even -- you know, just stopping at a restaurant after getting off, and just sitting and talking, and...

INTERVIEWER:

We're here at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy, for the State Police Oral History Project, on June 27, 2006, and this is tape two in our series. So, I thank you -- welcome.

MS. SMITH:

Thank you for inviting me.

INTERVIEWER:

Good. And when we left off on the last tape, we were talking a little bit about your experiences at Franklin, Troop "E".

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And you first came on the job in 1975, however, I'd like to go back a little bit -- I was interested in the type of uniforms that you wore in 1975, but even before that, what you wore, or what you

were issued while you were at the Academy. Do you remember?

MS. SMITH:

At the Academy it was just kind of like khaki type pants, but they were gray -- but they were that type of material.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And the shirts were basically like a gray work shirt type thing. If I remember correctly, the pants we bought ourselves.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

And like I said, they were just kind of like work pants, but they were gray, and then the shirts were issued -- and I believe both long sleeve and short sleeve shirts. The shoes I don't remember -- excuse me.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that the same thing that was issued to the men?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

It was?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, we were wearing the same type uniform.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And then knowing -- know now -- and I'd like to know if it was the same then -- that the cadets are gradually given pieces of their uniform as they progress through the Academy -- like they'll still be wearing their cadet shirt, but then they'll be given their holster, and their gun, and they'll wear that occasionally, and then gradually their given another piece of their uniform. Was that how it worked for you as well?

MS. SMITH:

I don't remember. I mean I'm sure that when we got to the point that we were qualifying and shooting -- you know, we did have our holster and everything, because we kept them in our rooms, and like when we had inspections and things they had to be laid out on our dresser -- or on our bed, I guess. But I don't recall getting pieces of other -- you know, other pieces of clothing throughout the time. Now...

INTERVIEWER:

What was the uniform that you were issued at graduation?

MS. SMITH:

We had the -- the only thing I guess that was basically different was the hat. We had the little meter maid type -- you know, hat, rather than the -- well, Smokey the Bear, or the Stetson type.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But -- you know, other than the gray pants, and just the standard issue. The shirts were a little different -- you know, they were for women...

INTERVIEWER:

Can you...

MS. SMITH:

...now -- let me think now...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

At some point they ended up being for women, but I don't think when we first got them that they were. I think they were men's shirts, and then later on -- and I can't really remember how much later, we started getting them that they were actually tapered different, and -- you know, had some -- you know, darts to fit around everywhere else -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I think at the beginning they were just kind of men's shirts.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Or not -- yeah -- I really don't remember.

INTERVIEWER:

With trousers?

MS. SMITH:

Trousers -- again, I think were men's -- you know, that you were just measured -- your waist and inseam, and -- you know, given men's pants. And it was again -- sometime later when you actually ended up going for a size 12, or 14, or whatever a women's size -- you know, would be rather than the men's size.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I think at the beginning -- like I said, that they were men's sizes.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And never -- you weren't ever given the skirt at all...

MS. SMITH:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

...that women were issued early on?

MS. SMITH:

No -- no. No, I didn't have a skirt. I had a purse.

INTERVIEWER:

Really.

MS. SMITH:

Which was done away with -- again some years later. And it was a nice purse, I mean -- you know, it came in handy, but -- and like I said -- you know, when we had the two inch revolver, you were able to -- it seems to me like there was a certain area in the purse that you could carry it, or on the flap, or something. I can't remember now exactly where it was. But you really used it for that, but -- you know, as you go on though to -- you know, you carry everything in a briefcase rather than in a purse -- you know, instead of lugging two things around, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And the shoes -- were the shoes, did they have a heel to them at all? Or were they just your typical shoe?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I never wore one with a heel. They were like the Chukka boots I believe, with the...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

With the buckle -- you know, on the side -- like came up to I guess about ankle high, and -- but no, I never had the -- and probably because I never had the skirt -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Because I think -- you know, women earlier were wearing some kind of little heel, or something...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and the skirt, and actually stockings, or nylons -- or
whatever was current at the time, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But no, I didn't do that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I was trying to think about the tie -- whether I had a different tie
or not, which right now I can't remember either.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. How long did you wear the Beanie, until you were
given a campaign hat?

MS. SMITH:

I would say a year or so -- two years maybe. And it may not
have been that long, I -- you know, because right now thinking of
it, I don't remember actually wearing it in Franklin -- you know,
which was my first station. So it couldn't have been a very long
time that we wore those. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I'm not really sure.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And besides the six inch .38, and the two inch .38, what other types of weapons were you issued, or whatever types accessories...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...to the uniform were you issued at that time?

MS. SMITH:

Well, of course handcuffs. We had a baton, and then on your belt you had your extra ammunition and things -- you know, for your gun. That's all I can think of right now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And -- you know, we -- they changed. At first we had the long, wooden like baton type thing -- you know, and then later they

changed to the ASP -- you know, which was the metal -- you know, kind of flicks out -- you know what I mean?

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

But that was some years later.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But that's all I can think of right now.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And with these batons, were you trained to use them? Or was it just something you were given and supposed to figure out what to do...

MS. SMITH:

No. Yeah, there was training. Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, really?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Yeah, both in the Academy, and then later when we changed to the other type of baton, then we -- you know, went through some additional training on using it.

INTERVIEWER:

Good.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And -- now you're issued the uniform -- and were you paid as you were going through the Academy?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you remember how much that was?

MS. SMITH:

I want to say it was like \$11,000 a year -- you know, I don't know how that works out bi-weekly, or whatever.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I think that's what we started out at.

INTERVIEWER:

And then as a Trooper, once you graduated your salary went up?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, there was an increase, but I don't recall how much it was. I mean -- you know, you weren't making phenomenal money.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, it's...

MS. SMITH:

I mean, it was a couple thousand -- probably more, but it wasn't a huge -- you know, increase.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Do you feel like at the time that it was enough to support your family and to get by with?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, at the time it was -- yeah. Yeah, because after all, I was making probably more -- you know, as -- when I became a Trooper, than I had been at the place I was working for prior to that.

INTERVIEWER:

So...

MS. SMITH:

And -- you know, then I was supporting my family on that, so -- yeah, I don't recall having any particular -- you know, hardships as far as -- you know, finances back then.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, I don't...

INTERVIEWER:

And do you feel that the salary in any way for other Troopers, or -- even just in general at the time, was any kind of an incentive, compared to today, where it might be somewhat of any incentive to become a Trooper?

MS. SMITH:

I don't really recall anyone -- you know, talking to me about the salary being an incentive. Like I said, I think -- again, a lot of the Troopers became Troopers because of the profession itself -- you know, it being a helping profession, and thinking that's what it is. Today, I don't know -- you know, if that's still true or not. And some people left jobs that they just didn't like -- you know, and went to other jobs, or -- you know, became Troopers, because they thought it would be -- you know, a better career than the type of jobs that they already had. But I don't recall --

like I said -- again, that anyone ever discussed that it was because it was a great paying job -- you know. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And can you describe how you felt that the public's view of -- not only in Pennsylvania, and the -- the public within the Commonwealth, their view of Troopers.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But also just society view of law enforcement in the early '70's, and what your perception of that was?

MS. SMITH:

I don't really know. As far as myself, being a Trooper, I found that most people were respectful.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Most people went out of their way sometimes to be helpful -- you know, if you asked them a question, and they were able to answer it, or provide you with information, they did that. So, I

guess that was -- you know, what I found back at that time -- I've got to stop for a minute...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, we'll just...

MS. SMITH:

I could feel it coming.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah...

MS. SMITH:

Okay, let's try that again.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Take your time -- like if you need a little bit more time.

MS. SMITH:

You know how you just get that tickle sometimes -- it's just...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, I know. That happens to me when I read aloud.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Like when you're talking constantly...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

My nose will start running, and -- okay. Okay, back to respect...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I think back then I felt that I was respected as a police officer. I think people -- you were able to approach people, without them instantly becoming defensive, and that they -- you know, tried to help in any way that they could. I don't see that that's true now, and I don't know if it's across the board police officers, I don't know if it's more with municipal police officers than it is with Troopers, because -- you know, even today when someone finds out that I was a Pennsylvania State Police Trooper, they still -- you know, comment on how well mannered, how -- if they have to be stopped they were -- you know, glad that it would be by a Trooper, rather than a municipal police officer, or whatever.

INTERVIEWER:

That's...

MS. SMITH:

So, as far as reputation, I mean -- you know, the Pennsylvania State Police definitely has a good reputation with people overall. So when you're in an area -- like when we talked about Franklin, and that was the main police department that the people knew -- even though the smaller towns did have their own police departments -- but the State Police patrolled all of the rural areas. And the areas that didn't have a police department, the people came to depend upon the State Police -- you know, and they respected them, and -- you know, if there was a problem that's who they were going to call. And a lot of times even if they were in a city that had a police department, or -- another example would be somewhere that had a part-time police department. People would wait until the State Police were covering that jurisdiction to call to make a complaint, because they would prefer that -- you know, it was investigated by the State Police, rather than by the local police department that they should've reported it to -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So again, I think all that goes back to -- you know, respect, and believing -- you know, that you're going to get the service that you were looking for if you called the State Police.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now in the really early days of the State Police, back when it first started in the early 1900's, and -- you know, I'm not sure when the switch came, or when things started to change, but the State Police as a position, and as a job, was held in really high esteem -- like very, very high regard within the State of Pennsylvania, and how do you feel that that position -- the employment of being a Trooper was held at the time that you joined?

MS. SMITH:

I think it was still held in high regard.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I think it still is actually.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, I mean there's always going to be individuals, and -- you know, there's always going to be circumstances and situations which don't portray us well -- or portray police officers well. But I think again, on an individual basis that the average citizen still looks at the job as a good position -- you know, or a respected position. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah. Now you touched a little bit upon something that I wanted to talk about, which is the relationship that you found between the State Police and then municipal police. And you've said that maybe people would wait until they knew that Troopers were going to be responding to give a call, when it was really the municipal police that should be handling the incident.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

In that type of a situation, would you have then told them, "You know, that's not really something we can do for you, you're going to need to wait," or would you just handle it, and what did the municipal police think about that -- that sort of thing. What was the relationship there?

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall ever having any -- you know, really serious problems with municipal police officers in the area that I was stationed -- excuse me. And the one that I was talking about in particular, when I was in the Franklin area -- you know, people wouldn't say -- they wouldn't call in their complaint and say -- you know, "This happened" -- you know, six hours later -- "While my police department was on duty" -- you know, they would call and say -- you know, "I want to report a theft," so on and so forth.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And -- you know, you'd go out and then you find out that -- you know, they could've reported it -- or at least they discovered it several hours earlier -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah...

MS. SMITH:

I don't call ever saying to anyone -- you know, "Well, we're not going to take the report now that we're here" -- you know, so -- but I don't recall -- again like I said, every having any particular problems with any municipal police officers, relative to that type of thing. I think some of our problems stemmed from the fact of

the hours that we patrolled, and they hours that they patrolled. And I can't remember now how it was decided on who would have the midnight shifts, and who would have the day shifts, and things like that, but -- you know, sometimes it just didn't work out that we would have the coverage during the times that we would prefer, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But again, I don't remember how those issues were decided -- you know, through the Department, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. How often did you have contact with the other police departments?

MS. SMITH:

As far as the city police departments, not real often. Like I said, if we're talking mainly about when I first came on the job and in Franklin, the Franklin City had their own police department, and Oil City, which was another city in Venango County had their own police department, and then there were several police departments that were part-time. And I personally probably had more contact with the part-time police officers than

I did with the city. You kind of just -- from where the station was located, maybe had to go through the city to get to an area that you had to patrol -- you know, or there were magistrates in the city, and things like that. But as far as working with them -- you know, not a lot of contact.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now when you were -- you know, you had scheduled shifts...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and were they -- was it pretty much, you're going to work eight hours, you get there at your scheduled time, and then you leave when you're scheduled to leave, or did it kind of flow into extra hours, and -- you know, was it more than just your typical eight hour a day job?

MS. SMITH:

It varied.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Well -- you know, we worked different shifts, like you said, and so it wasn't always and eight to four, or a nine to five, but -- you know, when I started out we did the triple headers, as far as midnight's -- that you worked a three to eleven, then you worked a seven to three the following day, and then that same day you came back out at eleven in the evening and started a week of eleven to seven's.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MS. SMITH:

And then when you finished those eleven to seven's, you went on four days off, and then you came back -- and generally we always worked an afternoon of daylight -- an afternoon of daylight -- you know, most of the time, and then you would finish up on a daylight, and then go on days off, and then come back on an afternoon shift. As far as overtime, there was some -- and again, it just kind of varied -- you know, depending on the situation. Of course, you know the stations, or the Department always wanted you to keep overtime down, so -- you know, you tried not to -- you know, you tried to get things finished within your eight hours. And I'm sure there was a lot of work done, both by myself and others, that you did on your own time, that

you weren't putting in for overtime. Especially when you first started out -- you know, and like I said, you get into a groove of doing reports. But at first it's a little hard -- you know, and so if you have accident reports to do and things like that, a lot of times you did them on your own time just to get them in -- you know, rather than -- you know, put in for the overtime -- it wouldn't have made any difference if you put in for the overtime or not, you were probably not going to be approved for it. It was like -- you know, you've had these eight hours to do this, and -- you know, you weren't going to be getting overtime for doing reports really.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

So, you kind of did those on your own time if it was necessary.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And how did you feel that your schedule fit with your family activities, and your duties as a mom?

MS. SMITH:

In Franklin, it was hard for me because of the different shifts. But like I said, my mother lived with me at the time, and she -- you know, she moved from Pittsburgh up to Franklin when I finally got a house up there, which was difficult to do. I mean I had a hard time finding a place, and things like that. But, when I finally did get a place, then the kids moved up and my mother moved up, so she took care of the kids. And like I said, I worked a lot of three to eleven's, a lot of seven to three's. I also worked a lot of six to two's, because the men -- most of the male Troopers didn't like the earlier shifts, so I traded a lot for a six to two shift and worked that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But -- so that gave me -- you know, the afternoons home. And then kids were in school, so -- you know, so three to eleven's was the hardest shift as far as being with them. For me, the midnight shift was the hardest, because I'm just not a night person. If I worked eleven to seven, then I would come home, I would get the kids ready for school, have breakfast with them, and I would sleep probably all day, and then I would get up when they came home from school, stay up, help with homework, have

dinner with them, and then generally I would go back to bed and sleep for another couple hours -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I would say for me -- like I said, that shift was the hardest -- and three to eleven of course I wasn't really seeing them at all, except for if I worked in the area -- if my patrol zone was within the area that I lived, then I would -- you know, stop by and check on the kids, or...

INTERVIEWER:

How great...

MS. SMITH:

...you know, be able to go stop and have dinner with them and things like that -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Well that's nice...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...to have been able to do that.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And I mean, I have -- I know I've stayed up all night sometimes for like school or something, but I don't know how I would do that for a job and -- that's a lot of coffee and adjusting, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Yeah -- yeah. Yeah, it is.

INTERVIEWER:

Just adjusting to that schedule.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. And for me, I don't think I ever adjusted, because you did like a week, and then it was finished, and then the next month you'd do it a week again -- you know, so I never really adjusted to that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I can recall the only -- one nice thing about working the midnight's was that you could go grocery shopping, and the stores would be just about empty -- you know, if you could get off at like at seven in the morning, and -- you know, go into a grocery store, and do you shopping, and there wouldn't be

anybody there. But one time I went in, and I'm standing in line -- I had gotten my groceries, and I'm standing in line, and I just start like crying -- you know, and tears and everything like that -- you know, and the cashier -- "What's wrong with you" -- you know, I said, "I am just so tired" -- you know, and I'm standing there, and I mean I -- you know, I'm sure I felt like an idiot at the time, but I was just so tired I just couldn't -- you know, couldn't move, but had decided I was going to go grocery shopping that morning, so that was what I did -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But, so -- like you said, drinking a lot of coffee -- and sometimes the coffee didn't even do it -- you know, especially in the winter, - - you know, you'd drink a bunch of coffee, and you're in the car, and you're riding around, and you have the heat on, and it gets warm -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and then it's like, "Oh, my goodness" -- you know, then you're really fighting -- fighting to stay awake -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Particularly if you were the passenger -- you know, if you're driving that helps, but if -- you know, and on midnight's you always worked two people.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, you did -- okay, that was my question...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...were you ever alone?

MS. SMITH:

No -- no.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. It seems like there would be somewhat of a dangerous factor in there in falling asleep when you're driving, and that sort of thing, but I guess if you're always with a partner...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...than that could be avoided by just conversation, or...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...were you allowed to play music in the car to help keep you awake, or anything like that?

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't think. I don't remember ever playing any -- I'm not going to say that you weren't allowed, but I don't recall ever playing any.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

You know, just -- you know, driving around, and you -- we used to do what they called house checks. So at the beginning of your shift -- and this wasn't only on midnight shift, but -- you know, midnight shift also -- you had house checks, and at the beginning of your shift, you would find out which houses you were supposed to check -- and at that time, it could be people that were going out of town -- you know, they were going to be gone for a certain amount of time and wanted their house checked, or other -- you know, circumstances -- whatever. So

you would get your stack of however many houses you had to check, and during your shift you would go to those different places -- you know, and then you would have to mark down that you had been -- you know, at a certain address at a certain time, so of course if there were ever any problems -- you know, they can go back and say, "Well -- you know, all the doors were locked, all the windows were okay" -- you know, "Everything was okay at such and such a time on this date" -- you know, and then when the people returned home, they call and say, "Oh -- you know, thanks for" -- you know, "Taking care of my house while I was gone." And I'm not sure -- you know, I think quite a few years ago they kind of stopped doing that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Because it can be cumbersome, and...

INTERVIEWER:

That's quite a service.

MS. SMITH:

...a burden -- yeah. Um-hum -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Involved in that -- you would just basically walk the perimeter, check the windows and doors, and that would be it, or...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...would you go inside, and like...

MS. SMITH:

No -- no.

INTERVIEWER:

...feed the pets, or anything...

MS. SMITH:

No -- no. It's a wonder, but no, we didn't do that.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. How did your kids adjust to life in Franklin? What did they think about moving there?

MS. SMITH:

I think they adjusted pretty well. Now again, they were I believe the first black children in their school. And we may have very well have been the first black family on the street that we lived on. But -- you know, they made friends, and -- you know, and my daughter even now talks to girls that -- you know, she had gone to school with in Franklin -- you know, so -- you know,

made some lasting friends. And they liked -- you know, they liked the area, and didn't really have any problems. My son did get in one fight, for a racial comment that was made to him, and as it ended up, it was a fight with a Trooper's son.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, and -- and I don't recall -- you know, all the ins and outs of it, but I know -- you know, the Trooper came to me -- it was somebody I was stationed with -- and said something to me about my son -- you know, getting in this fight, and so on and so forth, and -- you know, so I said, "Well, hey" -- you know, "He called him a name and he" -- you know, "They got into a fight" -- you know, but again, just as I was talking about the -- because I believe, whether it's true or not, that the father -- this Trooper probably had those stereotypes, and those prejudices, that -- you know, were said by his son.

INTERVIEWER:

And they were existing in the home...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. So -- but the point I was going to make was -- just like I mentioned about the Trooper who did not want to ride with me when I started, this Trooper that my son got into the fight with his son, in the end I think he had some changes -- you know, and saw some things that were -- that -- you know, people are basically the same -- you know. And I think -- you know, his mind was changed about some of the stereotypes, or prejudices that he had. And I don't know if they changed during the time that I was there, but I know later on I talked to a black female who knew that same Trooper, and because I had expressed what had happened with my family, she told me about some other incidences -- you know, and how well they had gotten along, and -- you know, things that had changed, so -- so that's a positive note, I guess -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, definitely. In the overall, do you feel that you were -- maybe not at first, because of stereotypes in a rural area -- I mean rural Pennsylvania, I think they still exist...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...very wide spread. But after some time, accepted and welcomed by the community?

MS. SMITH:

I guess it depends on what you mean by welcomed.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I don't -- I didn't make a lot of friends there, or anything like that -- you know, I wasn't visiting neighbors, and stuff like that -- you know. With the Troopers, again, we got along, but I don't think that we were actually really friends -- you know. Like I said, a lot of people -- a lot of the Troopers and police officers I guess in general sometimes go out to a bar or something -- like after -- you know, a shift, and I would do that -- more before my children moved there, because it was -- a little bit of time had passed from the time I got stationed there, and I got the kids actually moved. So at first, it was probably just loneliness -- you know, that I did it -- and I was staying in a motel, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

So -- you know, going out, and talking, and so on and so forth -- but like I said, I can't really say that you got to be -- or that I got to be friends. And I'm not going to say that that was really any of their faults either -- you know, like I told you, I was kind of -- you know, kind of quiet and not real out there. So, I don't think I -- you know, pushed to be friends with anyone either, so.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But, like I said, there wasn't really any big problems though either. Just -- you know, kind of status quo. You're just there, and your working, and you go home -- and another thing might have been was the fact that I wasn't any further from Pittsburgh than I was, because I went back to Pittsburgh quite a bit -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, I had relatives there, and -- you know, I would take the kids, and we would go back and -- you know, stay with somebody there, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...there wasn't a lot of probably -- time off if I was able to go back, that I spent actually there.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Now, if you meant the community being welcoming as far as police work, yeah I think they were -- you know, it got to be that I wasn't -- you know, looked at as strangely as I was when I first got there. And like I said, just that -- you know, it was an oddity, to see -- you know, a black female driving a State Police car, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And as a matter of fact, when you had asked me earlier about my coach, I can remember going to an incident -- and I don't

really remember what type of incident it was, I think it may have been like a theft, or something that the guy had reported. And we went to interview him, and my coach is standing next to me, and the victim keeps telling Trooper Anderson what happened, and he's saying -- you know, looking him and saying this is what happened, and this -- you know, so on and so forth. And at some point, Trooper Anderson said to him, -- you know, Trooper Smith is handling this investigation, and -- you know, you don't need to continue talking to me, you need to turn around, and talk to her, and -- you know, tell her -- you know, what the answers to whatever the questions are -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So, I think -- you know, as I was there -- you know, it became easier, and -- you know, people started saying, well -- you know, this is who I'm going to have to deal with. I mean, it's either deal with this person who's there to handle it, or -- you know, don't report it -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

So sometimes to -- you know, just not having a choice.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Did you find yourself running into the same people over and over in such a small community?

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't think so. There was -- I mean it was a small community, but it's not a small county, you know what I'm saying?

INTERVIEWER:

Right. Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So -- you know, the town you might think was small or whatever - - the city itself, but -- you know, the county wasn't that small, and there were some areas that you had -- which I guess is true anywhere -- areas where there was higher crime, or whatever -- you know, and I hate to be stereotypical about trailer parks, but -- you know, there was one that we -- you know, got numerous calls to all the time -- you know, so I mean -- you know, so you

might have some of the same people in a small area like that -- you know. But again -- you know, there was a -- it wasn't a really, really, busy, busy, area as compared to other stations that I had gone to, and so maybe I don't have the same perspective...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, as to when I got stationed like in Uniontown, and -- you know, it was like three times as busy as Franklin had been -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, I guess that was kind of leading into my next question, what -- you talked about the zones that you had, that there were like six zones, you had one zone...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...within the county...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Whether that was more than enough to patrol, or whether you felt like you could take on more -- you know?

MS. SMITH:

Again, it would all depend.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, what was going on, the areas -- and I would say this is probably true in general -- the areas that are closer to the cities are usually busier -- you know, and then as you spread out from the city, and you get into even the more rural areas, where -- like I said, maybe you just have like a lot of hunting cabins, and not a lot of people who are full time residents -- you know, you're not going to have a lot of incidents. You might have a lot of incidents during hunting season, or when hunting season starts, and people come to their cabins and realize that they've been broken into and they've been burglarized -- you know. But as far as the areas outside of the city, which are just more populated -- you know, you're going to have more incidents. So I don't -- I don't think that it was ever to the point of being too busy -- you know, for you to handle. But of course, sometimes you did have

to call for assistance, and sometimes -- you know, if you were handling something, and it was -- you know, going to take a while to take care of, somebody else would have to -- you know, come in to assist. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum -- yeah. One thing that I was kind of trying to ask about as well -- when we were talking about the hours that you had to work, and -- you know, what time you had off, and what you did in your time off with your kids, and that sort of thing, was basically whether you felt like you were a State Trooper when you were in those eight hours -- or nine, or -- during those shifts, and that you were able to kind of say, "Okay, this is where I stop being a State Trooper, and I'm now a mom -- I'm now just Ms. Smith"...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

..."Virginia," and -- you know, in that transition between being a law enforcement officer, if you could see a crime, or see something happening when you're not on duty, and just -- I mean, were you ever in that kind of a situation where you had to

respond to something off duty, or whether you felt like you even needed to, or could, or (inaudible)?

MS. SMITH:

I can't recall right now...

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MS. SMITH:

...having to respond to anything when I was off duty.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, there may have been something like -- you know, driving down the road and seeing an accident. And of course -- you know, you would stop, and find out if everyone was okay, or whatever -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, you would -- okay.

MS. SMITH:

... but yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But then -- you know, you would call for someone else, as far as -- you know, doing the investigation. I wouldn't continue on with it.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

But as far as working the eight hours, and then being off, I never had a problem with that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Eight hours and I'm off -- you know. And the transition for me wasn't hard. As a matter of fact, somebody said to me one time, I probably transitioned easier than anyone they had ever seen -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And maybe it was because the children were there, and -- you know, I was involved with their lives, and -- you know, they were becoming involved in other things at school, and sports, and --

you know, things that they had to do, so when I was with them in the afternoons -- you know, there wasn't any police work involved. I can recall someone calling me at home one time, about a warrant -- I don't remember, I guess I -- maybe I had a listed number at that time, I don't recall. But -- you know, a lady called me at home about a warrant that had been issued for her son, and I'm like -- you know, "What are you doing calling me at home" -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...well, "Yeah, I just want to find out," so on and so forth -- well -- you know, "I'll talk to you when I go back to work" -- you know, like that. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That's probably when I started getting an unlisted number, but again -- you know, you would -- If you came upon something, I mean it was your duty to respond, or to -- you know, take some action there. But then -- you know, again you'd call, and let someone know that this incident has occurred, or someone

needs help, or that there's an accident, or whatever -- you know, the case may have been, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And just as a matter of being trained as a law enforcement officer, from that point on, do you feel that you looked at the world, at society, and at everything through a law enforcement officer's eyes? And just your opinions of things, and everything, did they change once you became a law enforcement officer? Did they become more geared towards, this is the letter of the law?

MS. SMITH:

I don't know if I became more geared towards this is the letter of the law, because I think I was a pretty upright, upstanding citizen to begin with -- you know, so I never was involved in any illegal activity, or anything like, so -- do you understand what I'm saying?

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So I don't know that my perception changed in that manner.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I think that my perception changed in people.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Because of the way I was brought up, and the area that I grew up in, and like I said, it was a small area. I was -- my perception, my sarcasm, my skepticism -- you know, about people probably came out more after I became a Trooper, then had previously. Because I think it was surprising to me to find out that when you go to investigate an incident, and -- we'll just say it's a theft, that the victim may lie about what was stolen -- you know, that -- and I mean, it was kind of disheartening to find out sometimes that the victims would lie as much as the suspect, or the perpetrator - - you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I think that was something that throughout my career, and even after, that I've had to work on -- you know, and realize that I do have this perception, and to become more trustworthy of

people, and think -- you know, everybody's not going to -- you know, everybody's not going to do that. But there's always that thing in the back of the -- you know, that there's always a motive -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...there's always something going on that you're not really seeing, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I think that -- and as far as I guess always having this letter of the law type thing, I could say like as it relates to the kids...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And even now people talk about -- and you may have read in the paper, where parents are being arrested, or they're talking about arresting parents who furnish alcohol for their kids at parties.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, so that was one of the things when my kids were younger -- you know, especially when they got to be teenagers. You know, that they would want to have parties, and -- you know, "Well we can have beer, and we can have this, or we can do this, that, and the other" -- and I'm like, "No, no you can't do that" -- you know, and -- now I don't know, and I have no way of knowing whether if I hadn't been a Trooper, whether I would've felt the same way or not -- you know, but my kids thought that I was strict. You know, and -- you know, "All this kids are doing this," or, "All the kids are doing that," well -- you know, "Just because all the kids are doing it, you can't -- you know, do it."

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But like you said -- again, I don't know if I would have been any different had I not been a Trooper, so...

INTERVIEWER:

What about with discipline? Do you feel like after the discipline, and the things that happened at the Academy start the ways -- I mean you were never disciplined -- but the way that others were

disciplined at the Academy, and just that structure. Did that in any way alter the discipline, or the structure of your household with your children? Or did you -- did it go about the same as it was before? Or did you think that they noticed anything?

MS. SMITH:

I think they always thought I was a disciplinarian.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

That I was always strict. And again...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, I can't really judge between how different I would've been, if I had not been a Trooper.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I can only relate to the way I was disciplined as a kid -- I mean my kids got spanked -- you know. And they got grounded for doing things that they shouldn't have done. So like I said, I don't think -- you know, that I would've been a lot different. I can only

look at it as far as the law type things. Like -- I mean I wouldn't let my kids drive without having car insurance, or -- you know, they couldn't drive if they -- you know, didn't have their driver's license, or -- you know, things like that, or...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...if they had a junior driver's license, you'd have to be in at the time that -- you know, you're supposed to be in.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I definitely looked at those things, that maybe I wouldn't have looked at the same, but knowing -- you know, what they laws were, and knowing the consequences -- you know, and being strict on them about those things, whereas -- you know, some other kids may be -- you know, parents were not as strict on some of those issues. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Now you kind of touched on becoming somewhat maybe jaded with the -- you know, the way that people were.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I'm wondering if you were surprised as the prevalence of crime, or maybe the lack of crime when you first entered the job, and -- you know, if you thought that there was more than you expected, or even less?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Again, when I first started, and I was in Franklin, I don't -- I think everything was kind of just okay -- you know, I mean I don't think I was overwhelmed by the crime, nor did I think there was too little of it. However, when I transferred from Franklin, to Uniontown, I was overwhelmed. I was surprised about domestic violence. There was a lot of domestic violence -- you know, we had I would say probably every day somebody was calling in with a domestic violence complaint. And I guess that relates back too, to what you were asking me about seeing the same people, or talking to the same people -- that's one of the situations where you do -- you know, have -- and in most cases of course women, calling in about being abused by husbands, or boyfriends, or whoever. So I think I was surprised and overwhelmed by that. And even though by that time I had been on the job four years when I transferred there -- and I said how --

you know, doing reports becomes like -- you know, easier and easier, when you transfer and you're finding yourself overwhelmed with incidents, you get behind. And again -- you know, I spent a lot of time doing reports on my own, staying at the station doing reports, or taking them home doing them, just to be able to stay caught up with the reports, so -- and also, the areas that I worked in Uniontown were generally the populated areas, because of again, where I lived. So, if I had a preference of what areas I worked in, I would work in the area that was closest to my home, and that way I could go home and check on the kids, have dinner with them, or whatever -- you know, during my lunch break. So again, those areas were the most populated areas, so they had higher crime rates. They were also areas that had several housing projects...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...that might have had higher crime -- you know, crime rates.

And just again, the population -- you know, was higher in those areas, so -- you know, there was a lot more going on.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Whether it was domestic violence, or just -- you know, fights, or -
- you know, underage drinking -- you know, just the whole gamut
of things that were going on. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Is Uniontown still in Troop "E", or did you switch
Troops?

MS. SMITH:

No, I'm sorry. Yeah, it's Troop "B".

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, "B", okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And how did you go about -- or making the transfer, and deciding
to transfer, and that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I had always wanted to, because Troop "B" is -- it's Troop
"B", Washington, but Pittsburgh is a part of that Troop.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, I mean from the time I went to Franklin, I had always thought about wanting to go home -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And so when I had gotten in my four years, and I was permitted to request a transfer, that's what I did.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Excuse me. And so then I got to Troop -- which was "B", but then I was told I was going to Uniontown, instead of to Pittsburgh.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So that's where I ended up going.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Is that a much larger station than Franklin? In as far as the set number of Troopers there, and that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

There were more, yeah. Yeah, but like I said, it was a busier station, too.

INTERVIEWER:

You felt like they could've used more?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, it sounds like it.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. And it still...

INTERVIEWER:

How did they...

MS. SMITH:

...you know a busy...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...a busy Troop.

INTERVIEWER:

How did they receive you upon your arrival at Uniontown?

MS. SMITH:

I think well. I don't recall having -- you know, really any big problems there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

As far -- you know, as far as the Troopers, I don't recall having any problems. There was some supervisory problems, from supervisors who did not believe women should be on the job.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But again, it never got to the point where I thought I'd quit, or -- you know, or came to blows, or anything like that. But you know, when you're just having remarks made about your, or things like that, or...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, and particularly stuff that was going on behind your back -- you know, that people can't come and say things to you - - you know. And things that were not work related -- you know, things about my private life, and things like that -- you know. So

those were the kind of things, that -- you know, kind of make you angry, but -- you know, hey it worked out.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, I mean sometimes like I said, you just have to ignore it. And when people -- like I said, want to go behind your back, and ask questions about you, or what are you doing, or where are you going, or things that -- like I said, were totally irrelevant to the job. You kind of just try and ignore them and just -- you know, think about -- I don't know, what a small minded, I guess -- you know, person it is, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know consider the source, I guess. And realize too, that the person doesn't realize that they're not making themselves look any better by doing it -- you know. I mean they're not gaining the respect of the people they're going to and asking questions -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

About me -- of -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but -- I don't know if that just made sense, but...

INTERVIEWER:

It definitely -- yes, it did. Did you know anyone there, or heard of anyone, or had been acquainted with anyone at Uniontown before you transferred, or did you just go into it basically not knowing anyone?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I just went into it not knowing -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I don't -- I don't -- I can't recall that there was anyone that I knew there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- no.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Did your kids move with you then at that time?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- yeah. Yeah, they did.

INTERVIEWER:

And your mother as well?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, we all moved. Again, I don't remember -- you know, how long it took, but it took sometime from when I'd left Franklin, and went to Uniontown, before I found a house, and all that -- you know, so the kids and my mother stayed in Franklin for some time. When I first when to Uniontown, as a matter of fact, I stayed at the station -- at the Barracks, and slept on the floor -- you know, with a -- I had an uncle who'd worked for the railroad, and somehow he had ended up with this long leather like seat type thing, I guess from a train, or something -- and he gave that to me. And it was probably about six feet long, and it was leather on top, and then canvass on the bottom. And like I

said, I guess it had gone on a seat, or something on a train. But anyhow, so I had rolled that up and put it in my car, and when I went down there, I slept on the floor, put this pad down, had a sleeping bag -- you know, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That's where I'd be. Of course you had -- I think we had just one shower, so -- you know, if I spent the night there, and was going to take a shower, I -- you know, had a little sign that I had to put up, to -- you know, let everybody know I was in the shower, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Huh.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Interesting.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

When you first got there, and I guess this is -- we should say for record, 1979, right?

MS. SMITH:

Yes -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And you start -- did -- when you have a transfer like that, I'm wondering if again, you've got a coach, or someone that's going to help you get acclimated? Or is it just you come in, and you've got to hit the ground running? Or how do you -- because, I mean there's going to be streets, and places that you don't know, and...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Yeah -- you know, I really didn't have a coach, but there was someone that I rode with -- you know, to get used to the area.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

To show us the -- you know, well now you do have a map. But like I said -- you know, just to get you used to the area, and -- you know, let you know where things are, or some of the hot spots as they call them -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Places where it's more than likely -- you know, you're soon going to be going to for some type of incident. Also of course, the restaurants, and -- you know, where you can go and eat, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But -- yeah, I mean after four years, I guess you're pretty well -- you know, that you know pretty well -- you know, how to investigate -- you know, an incident. Like I said, my biggest surprise was in Uniontown, was the domestic violence things -- you know. I -- in Franklin -- you know, in the four years I was there, maybe I was at four domestic violence incidents. And when I went to Uniontown, I was probably at one -- you know, at least once a week, and -- you know, sometimes more often than that. And if I was going once a week, somebody else was also going -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So for me that was the biggest change I think, in the type of incidents, that I had previously encountered -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Did that in any way -- I mean having that kind of exposure to the issue of domestic violence, did that make you want to become more deeply involved in the solution and prevention, rather than just the response to?

MS. SMITH:

In some ways. I did do some classes on domestic violence later on -- you know, and taught some classes here at the Academy...

INTERVIEWER:

Really?

MS. SMITH:

...on domestic violence. And I guess -- you know, just it maybe gave -- it's kind of a difficult situation. Because you have the empathy -- you know, and you feel for the person who's the victim, but then you get kind of just tired of it, when it's the same person over and over -- you know, and it's like -- you know, "How can you continue to stay?" I mean, you try to be understanding - - and there are a lot of reasons why victims do stay -- you know, that maybe sometimes we don't see -- you know. Whether it's

financial, or it's because of the children, or whatever -- you know, there low self esteem, whatever the issues may be. So on the one hand, you can have the empathy for the victim, but then on the other hand, you want to say -- you know, "Get yourself together, and get out" -- you know, "Leave" -- you know. I don't know -- so...

INTERVIEWER:

As a State Trooper, were you ever able to sit aside with -- maybe some of these women. Maybe ones that you are seeing over and over, and talk to them frankly about maybe a solution, or maybe -- or was that beyond what you could do as a Trooper? Was that something that Social Services needed to take care of, or somebody else needed to take care of, or did you feel like you could take on the roll, or had that responsibility?

MS. SMITH:

No. There wasn't a time that I actually sat down with someone and talked to them about it -- you know. But if I did talk to someone -- and I don't think it was just myself, it was -- you know, any Troopers that were responding to those type incidents -- you know, you were going to advise the person of what they -- their options were, about protection from abuse, and things like that -- you know, and how they could go about protecting

themselves. What steps they may be able to take if they did want to move out of the house -- you know, who they could contact, give them numbers, and things like that -- you know. So you kind of tried to give them some guidance, and let them know what their options were. But I never -- like you said, took it on as a personal like -- you know, campaign...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...to remove them. But again, like I said, I think most Troopers when responding to the incidents -- you know, took those types of steps to ensure, first of all a person's safety, and to let them know -- you know, what steps they could take, or what options they had. And particularly, as the years went by -- because I think just the whole perception of domestic violence has changed over the years -- you know. I mean, from way back when, when -- you know, the women deserved to be hit, or whatever, you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...so you'd seen the progression, and the forward thinking I guess, as to -- you know, what the victim's really suffering, and -- you know, what you can really do to help the victim, and not look at her as -- her or him, in some case, as wanting the abuse, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think that the prevalence of domestic violence has declined? Or do you think it's on average the same because of the population growth?

MS. SMITH:

I think probably on average it's the same.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, I think people don't -- some people don't realize -- you know, that domestic violence covers the whole spectrum of -- you know, economics, and race, and cultures, and things like that -- you know. And there's probably still a lot that go unreported for various reasons. So, I think in the Uniontown area, one of the problems was the economics. It was a fairly depressed area at the time -- and it may still be. But coal mining had been a large industry...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...a lot of the coal mines had closed down, and things like that. Uniontown is the southwestern part of the State, right near the West Virginia line, so we had some people that come in from West Virginia also. And again, I hate sounding stereotypical, but I can only repeat what I had heard, or believed to be true at the time -- a lot of people came in because of higher welfare payments -- people who were unemployed moved into the area - - you know, to receive -- you know, money, because they couldn't get work, or whatever, where they were living. So you had all these different socioeconomic things going on -- you know, like I said, high unemployment, a depressed area, people not working, people who were uneducated, and all these things kind of came together to make that a place where there was a lot of domestic violence. But that doesn't alleviate the fact that there's domestic violence even in -- you know, areas where people are making a bunch of money, and people are well educated, but -- so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Other than domestic violence, -- now I'm assuming -- okay you're pretty much -- your job duties, or description is patrol...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...for Franklin.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And did that stay the same patrol, while you were in Uniontown?

MS. SMITH:

Yes -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

All right, so responding to incidents, also traffic...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...types of things...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And how long were you in Uniontown, before you went...

MS. SMITH:

Well, for the patrol function, I did that for a little over a year.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And then -- I don't even remember how it came about -- they needed a recruiter in the area.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And I applied, or -- you know, to be a recruiter. And sometime I believe in 1980, or even early '81, I became a recruiter, and

worked basically out of Uniontown, but our main station -- or main area was in Pittsburgh. But we were recruiting for -- you know, Allegheny County, Fayette County, Washington -- all the areas around Pittsburgh, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And so I started doing that.

INTERVIEWER:

What did that entail?

MS. SMITH:

Well, it definitely entailed taking applications -- you know, if someone was interested in putting in an application, helping them fill out the application, and processing that. But it also entailed going out to different schools and talking, giving presentations, going to job fairs, things like that and -- you know, just talking about careers as a State Police Officer.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel like you were able to -- I mean, in your experience at Uniontown then with -- like we were just talking about all this domestic violence, and crime, and how busy you were, and somewhat overwhelmed in the beginning. Do you think as a recruiter, you were able to speak really frankly about what the job entailed? Or do you think you had to give somewhat of a rosier picture of what the State Police was all about?

MS. SMITH:

I think you tried to be truthful, so that people had realistic expectations -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Of what it was going to be. Because after all, after you go through the trouble of recruiting them, and getting them into the Academy, you don't want them to graduate and then quit, because if the job's...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, entirely different from what they expected. Of course, you did also put a good spin on other things that they

would be able to do -- like you were asking me at the beginning -
- did the recruiter talk to me about other jobs, other positions --
you know, with the State Police. So you did tell them about that
also. But I think -- like I said, you'd try to be realistic, and tried to
let them know that -- you know, you're going to start out as a
Trooper on patrol, and these are the duties of a patrol Trooper.
And as you gain seniority, experience, then you may be able to
into other areas, but this is where you're going to start out at,
so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So like I said, I think you wanted them to have a realistic
expectation of what to expect, and what they were actually going
to be doing, so that -- you know, you don't go in thinking you're
going to have one job, and you end up having another -- you
know. And let them know, too that -- I mean, we're not talking
about -- you're going to be on patrol for a couple weeks, and all
of the sudden you're going to find yourself -- you know, doing
something else. It's going to be a while -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

(Inaudible) investigation...

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

...or anything exciting...

MS. SMITH:

Right -- yeah -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And at the time, did you -- as far as your job was concerned, and your supervisor, did you have a quota that you had to meet, for how many people you had to recruit? Or what were your goals and targets for those early '80's? Like what were the State Police looking for then?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I don't recall us having a quota.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, you just tried to recruit as many people as you can that were women, and that were minorities. Because the State Police has never had a problem getting white males.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

So recruiting isn't geared towards them -- you know, at all. Of course you want to get people of high quality, high caliber -- you know, that you believe are going to do the job. But as far as recruiting, it was geared towards -- and I believe still is -- geared towards women and minorities. Because those are the people who first of all, don't know a lot about the State Police probably. And to have a diverse police department -- you know, those are the people that you need to recruit.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. What do you think -- or how successful do you feel you were as a recruiter then?

MS. SMITH:

How successful...

INTERVIEWER:

Do you think you're a good motivational speaker? Do you think you could really get them excited about it, or -- I mean...

MS. SMITH:

I don't know how motivational I am, because again -- you know, I'm kind of low key.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So I don't know about how motivational I can be. But I think, again -- you know, just laying out the facts -- you know, this is what it is, and telling what my experiences were, and how I found the State Police to be a rewarding career, and letting -- you know, people know that-- you know. There were sometimes that you were recruiting people who were already in college, and -- you know, may have already...

INTERVIEWER:

Hello, and welcome.

MS. SMITH:

Hi.

INTERVIEWER:

My name is Shelly Levins, and I'm here with retired Major Virginia Smith. We're here at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy in Hershey, and today is July 10, 2006. This is tape three in our Oral History Project Series. So welcome back -- thanks for coming back.

MS. SMITH:

Thanks for inviting me again.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes. When we left off last time, we were talking a lot about your experiences first coming on the job -- those first few years coming on the job, and just what that was like for you.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

I'd like to kind of take off from there, and talk about your first promotion, and then kind of go through the different promotions you had over the years, up until your history making rank of Major.

MS. SMITH:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

And so first of all, it was in 1982, correct?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

That you were promoted to Corporal.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I'm wondering how the promotion to Corporal was different than being a Trooper. Can you describe that difference in your duties -- or in the new station?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Well, when I got promoted to Corporal, I transferred from Uniontown to Washington. So I was still in the same Troop -- I didn't move or anything, because I was able to drive to the Washington Station -- or headquarters. As far as different duties -- you know, as you go up in rank, I guess it becomes more administrative.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, correcting reports -- and Washington being the headquarters was -- you know, fairly busy. So there were a lot of reports to correct, and things like that, and supervision of the patrols -- you know, during each shift. So I continued to work shifts as a Corporal, and became more involved -- I guess to with like vehicle maintenance, and things like that -- you know, other than just patrol duties that I had as a Trooper.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And in being promoted -- I mean, now you've got people, for lack of a better word, under you, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

That you're -- like you said, correcting their reports and that sort of thing.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

How do you think the people, and -- the Troopers namely -- the people who were under you at Washington, how do you think they responded to you transferring there, and becoming their new supervisor?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. I think they responded well -- you know, I don't recall having any particular problems with any of the Troopers at that time, or being a supervisor. So -- yeah, I thought -- you know, I thought it went well, just looking back -- you know. I think generally -- you know, sometimes -- I guess people think about women as supervisors -- particularly over a lot of men, or something like that -- but I think if you go in and you show them -

- the Troopers -- male Troopers in particular, that you're willing to do the work, that you've done the work in the past -- you know, you're not -- you know, looking for fame and glory, I guess. That you're there to do the job -- you know. And I think coming from Uniontown, I already knew quite a few of the Troopers, because like I said, I was in the same Troop.

INTERVIEWER:

Exactly -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So I already knew some of the Troopers that I ended up supervising. And they also knew that in that Troop at that time, Uniontown was the busiest station, so I think they knew that I had the experience, as far as handling different types of incidents, so they were comfortable with that -- you know, and comfortable with me supervising them.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And you had walked in their shoes, and they knew that -- that you knew what they were going through, and you could relate to them in that way...

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

...to be...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Because I think sometimes -- and myself to, I'm sure included, a Trooper feels maybe a little awkward, or -- I can't think of the word I want to use -- when someone comes say like from an administrative position already -- you know. Say someone had been at Headquarters, and their being promoted to Corporal, and somehow they were to end up at Washington, or Uniontown, and this is their first time actually supervising patrols -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So then you're a little skeptical -- you know, and "How's this person going to be?" And -- you know, what do they really know, coming from somewhere outside of the patrol related functions before -- you know. So I think -- like you said, that I don't think I really had any big problems, because I did know some of them, and they knew that I had already been in the Troop, and they knew that I had already done -- you know, most of what they had done. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. How long did you stay in Washington?

MS. SMITH:

About nine months.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then I transferred back to Uniontown.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your reason for doing that?

MS. SMITH:

Well like I said, it was still in the same Troop.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I was living in Uniontown, not to far from -- you know, the Uniontown Station, whereas to Washington I was driving, I guess about 45 minutes -- an hour, to go to work. And like I said, I was

working -- you know, different shifts still, so that can get -- you know, kind of crazy when you're -- you know, three to eleven one night, and seven to three the next night -- I mean next day, and again sleeping -- you know, at the station on a couch somewhere, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I wanted to go home -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So that's why I transferred.

INTERVIEWER:

And how was it coming back to Uniontown? Were they happy to see you back?

MS. SMITH:

I don't know if happy is the word, but I mean, they were accepting -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I think to, maybe what may have helped was -- even though I knew some of the Troopers that I would be working with at Uniontown, because I had been stationed there previously, I did have that one year break in there during the time I was doing recruiting. So I had been a Trooper on patrol at Uniontown, then I did recruiting for about a year, and so when I got promoted, I went from recruiting to Corporal, and went to Washington.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then -- you know, so I guess -- again it works the same way. I was away from the Uniontown Station, and so I started learning about supervision basically at Washington, so I had a little bit of supervision experience when I came back to Uniontown. And so I'm sure again -- you know, the Troopers realized that -- you know, it wasn't like I was just newly promoted. I had at least been a supervisor for those nine months.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know -- and I think you always have people who -- you know, maybe because you do know them, kind of have a

tendency to take advantage -- I guess it works both ways -- you have people who, because they do know you are willing to work hard for you, and then you have people on the other side, who think, "Well" -- you know, "I know this person, and they're going to let me get away with such and such," or -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...whatever, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you -- I mean, would you classify yourself as a fairly strict supervisor, or were you somewhat lenient? How would you say you...

MS. SMITH:

I think I was a little bit of both.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

In the strict area, if you have -- an incident is called in, and you're supposed to respond to it, do what you're supposed to do -- you know. But a little lenient on other things -- you know, maybe taking a little extra time at lunch, or something like that, or having

a report that's due at a certain time and -- you know, if you're able to let it go for a few days, because the person is really busy, and -- you know, just hasn't had a chance to do it, without -- I'm saying writing them up, or giving them -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...some kind of corrective action because of late reports. So, I think there was a place for both -- you know, at times when you had to be strict, and you knew -- you know, what needed to be done, and you expected them to carry through with what needed to be done. But at the same time, if you had the chance to be lenient in other areas, you could be. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So as a Corporal, in what's -- Uniontown and Washington, I guess there Sergeants, right -- that are also...

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

...at those stations?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And you had to just -- if you're in charge of all these Troopers, then what are they doing? Are they...

MS. SMITH:

Well, we were divided up into platoons. So mainly, you were in charge of the platoon that you worked with.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

You know, you would work the same shift with that platoon, you would be correcting the reports of those people in your platoon -- so the Sergeant was first of all your supervisor -- the Corporal's supervisor.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And the Sergeant's at both of those stations did the schedules and -- you know, things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. How -- and in getting promoted to Sergeant -- now I know you transferred in between that to Pittsburgh, correct?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

In '85. Did you serve the same role as you're describing now? Just being a supervisor to Corporals, and creating the schedule, and that sort of thing?

MS. SMITH:

Mostly I did, except that Pittsburgh was a different type of station than either Uniontown or Washington, because Pittsburgh being a large city has their own police department. So there wasn't a lot of areas that we actually patrolled. Pittsburgh itself was more for serving warrants, they had the inspection station -- inspection stations Troopers who -- you know, went to the different inspection stations, and made sure that they were following all the regulations, and things like that -- did a lot of warrants and OR's. Also, because Pittsburgh has a correctional facility there, we would investigate any incidents at the state prison, things like that. So there wasn't as much of the patrol related functions, as -- you know, the other types of incidents.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. So from Uniontown to Pittsburgh -- you stayed in Uniontown it looks like for about three years, and then -- what was the decision making in the transfer? Or was it up to you -- did you decide to go, or were you told...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I decided to go.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And thought I was going to be moving back home, which -- you know, Pittsburgh was home.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

When I left Uniontown I had a house there, and I went to Pittsburgh and I rented an apartment, thinking that eventually I was going to end up moving back to Pittsburgh. But then in '86 I got promoted.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

So I never got a chance really to -- you know, get a house and move back home, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. In all of this moving, your daughter -- or two daughters, correct?

MS. SMITH:

Daughter and son.

INTERVIEWER:

Daughter and son, sorry.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Both living in Uniontown still with your mother?

MS. SMITH:

Yes -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

At home -- okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

All right. Now in this transfer, this is probably the largest transfer, I guess, to Avondale, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

As a Sergeant.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So can you describe that, and how that was for your family, getting down there and...

MS. SMITH:

Okay.

INTERVIEWER:

...or if they went...

MS. SMITH:

Okay. No, they didn't go. They remained in Uniontown. And again, it was -- the biggest part of it was the distance.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know because -- and I can't even remember now how long of a drive it was, but -- you know, several hours...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...to go from Pittsburgh to Avondale. And so I went home on weekends when I could. Sometimes during the winter when -- you know, the roads were really bad, I would just stay in Avondale. And then at some point after I had been there for a while, I started working ten days on, and four days off, so that gave me more time at home. At Avondale, even though I was a Sergeant, I was basically an extra Sergeant, because there was already a patrol Sergeant there. So I had different duties than Sergeants maybe at other stations. First of all, I was supervising the clerical, and the police communications operators. And then I also would work shifts, and be the patrol supervisor during different shifts.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, I was still working -- you know, the midnight's, and the daylight's, and afternoons. But then in addition, like I said, I also supervised the civilian personnel there. I was also in charge of vehicle maintenance, and building maintenance, so I took care of that kind of stuff. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Lots of hats to wear, I mean...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah there was -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...sounds busy.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Interesting.

MS. SMITH:

But I think that's one of the things that's been nice with the State Police -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That you have this variety of jobs -- you know, variety of things that you learn about, and learn to do. And the opportunity -- and even though it sounds like it might be a hardship, the transferring, at the same time I kind of liked it -- you know. Now it's kind of hard to stay put in one place, because it's like every couple of years you think, "Oh" -- you know, "I should be able to go somewhere," or "I should be able to move somewhere."

INTERVIEWER:

It's in your blood now.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, I know that same feeling.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I think to though, it takes -- I mean, I think that it takes that willingness to be able to transfer -- to want to transfer, and to want to see and do new things within the State Police...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...because -- I mean, wouldn't you say that if you didn't have that willpower, to move up in the rank, and to try new things, and try all these different hats, that you could've stayed a Trooper on patrol for your entire career?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, I could.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I think -- well, as of right now I'm 60.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, I think way back -- you know, it was in my mind that I could not imagine myself being a Trooper on patrol at 60 -- you know. So there was always the incentive -- maybe not to become a Major, but at least to be promoted, and not work the shifts -- you know, and not be on patrol. I just -- you know, couldn't imagine doing that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I think that was a lot of the incentive, in addition to -- you know, liking to do new things, and having the challenge.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now you mentioned -- I wanted to touch on something you talked about. How you were able to go ten days on, and four days off.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was it due to your new rank as a Sergeant, that you were given that kind of flexibility, or did everyone kind of have that option to choose their schedule like that? Or did...

MS. SMITH:

A little bit of both.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

The Sergeant at the station who actually did the schedule did not like the idea, for whatever reason, I don't know. But the Lieutenant -- I had talked to him about it, and he also was travelling -- not as far as I was, but I think he was travelling like from the Hazleton area or somewhere, down to Avondale. And so he realized -- you know, I mean what -- again, hardship it is...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...to make the trip, on the weekends, or two days during the week, or whatever it would be. So he was amenable to me working the ten days on, and four days off. But I mean, I have seen other -- you know, stations where people have been given the choice if possible -- you know. And that way, you're having off, basically every other weekend -- you know, when you're working ten on and four off -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, I...

MS. SMITH:

And you get a long weekend -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

It makes the drive a little less painful.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum, um-hum. Um-hum -- to get off -- you know, on a Thursday basically.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Be off that Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and then come back maybe on a Tuesday afternoon -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, that did help when you're driving that distance -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And during the time that I was in Avondale, I had accommodations at the Emeryville Station. They had like rooms there.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

And we were able to -- you know, stay there. If I recall correctly, the Emeryville Station was at an old nursing dormitory, or a -- where there had been a mental hospital, and so the station was in that nursing dormitory.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

And so there were rooms down stairs where the nurses had -- you know, accommodations, and we were able to stay there.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, it was still a functioning nursing dormitory...

MS. SMITH:

No, there...

INTERVIEWER:

It was closed then?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, the State Police had that...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...whole building -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Were there other...

MS. SMITH:

But the hospital was still up there -- there was still a hospital on the same grounds that...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...that was functioning?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- okay. Interesting.

MS. SMITH:

Yes, it was.

INTERVIEWER:

Were there other -- or other Sergeants for that matter -- Corporals or Troopers, that were doing the same thing? Staying -- living there, and patrolling?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, there were. Yeah, there were a few people that stayed there off and on.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Also, there were people who might have been working Vice, or on the Strike Force, or something like that, and maybe were working in the area, and they would also stay there -- you know.

So I mean, you would see people coming and going -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you tell me about the next time that you transferred and why?

MS. SMITH:

Okay...

INTERVIEWER:

What happened after Avondale?

MS. SMITH:

Well again, it was getting back to the western part of the State.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I liked Avondale as a station. I thought that the Troopers there were -- you know, really great.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

They were hard workers, and that's something that I found -- and I don't know if anybody will agree with this, but I found that at stations where you are generally busy, they don't have time for the petty stuff -- you know, there's not a lot of in fighting, and bickering, and whatever -- you know. They just go out there and work, and there's a better bonding I guess, between the Troopers and -- you know, the personnel at a station like that. Because they really do depend on each other -- you know, as far as responding to incidents, and backing each other up, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, I guess if Avondale had been a station in the western part of the State, I would've like have stayed -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

And I mean, I think that's probably the first time I actually cried -- you know, when I transferred -- you know, because I really did like it, and I liked the people that were there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, there were -- I don't think I have really any complaints about any of the Troopers.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

There were a lot of young Troopers there -- there were a lot of Troopers who came there right from the Academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, it was a challenge -- you know, having so many younger people, and not people that -- you know, had experience like you would have at Pittsburgh, or even Uniontown.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So again, I transferred mainly just because I wanted to get back to the western part of the State. And like I said, that -- you know, my children were still there. So I requested a transfer back to Troop "B", Washington. And I went to Washington again, as a Sergeant.

INTERVIEWER:

So here you are back, are there any of the same people...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, there were some of the same people.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Now I was kind of like in the same situation -- there was already a patrol Sergeant there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I was again the extra Sergeant. But there I did more of the patrol related functions than I did at Avondale.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Just supervising the shifts, and -- you know, the platoons, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and working still -- different hours.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

One thing I'm wondering about Avondale, just going back really quickly, you mentioned that it was fairly busy.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And that -- you know, helped keep people's minds off petty things.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

When I think of Lancaster, and probably when most people think of Lancaster, they think of farm land and open spaces...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and not really anything that would seem busy for a State Trooper.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So I'm hoping you can describe to me like what were these incidents, or was it just because there was so much ground to cover in that rural area?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Well, Avondale first of all is in Chester County...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...rather than in Lancaster -- it's in Troop "J", Lancaster...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, right. Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...but it's in Chester County. So, Avondale covered the southern part of Chester County, and Emeryville covered the northern part of Chester County.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, I mean -- you know, we had incidents like at Westchester -- at the University, and -- you know, Brandywine, and all those areas. Also we had quite a few incidents with the -- I guess they would be migrant workers, who came in and -- mushrooms -- you know, the mushroom farms, there's a lot mushroom growing...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, I didn't know...

MS. SMITH:

And in the Avondale area, I don't know if there still is, but I'm assuming there is.

INTERVIEWER:

When you say, "Mushrooms," you mean as in like illegal drugs?

MS. SMITH:

No, as like in...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

It's like in the mushrooms that grow -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh -- mushrooms we eat?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay -- normal people eat.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, I wasn't sure if these were...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- no, mushrooms. So -- matter of fact, when I first went down there -- I don't know if you ever get a chance to drive down that way. Just like in Hershey you have the smell of chocolate, in the Avondale area you have the smell of -- I don't know --

fertilizer, manure, whatever -- you know. And it took a little getting used to -- you know, and just like in Hershey, with the chocolate that sometimes just seems to like lay in the air, or whether it's the humidity, or -- you know, the weather -- you know, sometimes you can smell it more than others...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That's how it was with that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

And for I would say the first couple of weeks going to work, I would get like sick every morning -- like an upset stomach -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

And then I guess just like everybody that lives there -- you know, you get used to it, and -- you know, don't really mind the smell anymore, or get used to the smell, but...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...yeah. So anyhow -- so we had a lot of incidents with the migrant workers who were -- you know, there.

INTERVIEWER:

What types...

MS. SMITH:

Well...

INTERVIEWER:

...can you describe what was going on with the migrant workers at that time that you were there?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I mean just -- you know, the same type of incidents that you had with anybody.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Now, a lot of them -- not a lot of them -- but I guess, people they lived kind of like in camps, and housing that was owned by the mushroom growers -- or the owners.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So you had a large number of people maybe in a concentrated area. So sometimes you had fights, and of course -- you know, when people get off from work, and I guess working all week, sometimes there would be a lot of drinking. So there'd be -- you know, fights, and things like that going on, being involved in motor vehicle accidents -- you know. But -- you know, the same type of incidents really...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

As you would anywhere else.

INTERVIEWER:

Was there ever an issue though with -- you know, them being undocumented, or did you ever have to deal with -- I mean it's definitely a hot issue right now...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...illegal immigration, and not having the documentation that they need to work in the United States legally...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. I...

INTERVIEWER:

...what was the issue then, or was there even one that you had to deal with?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I -- yeah, I never really dealt with it personally. I mean, I know there were people who were brought in, who they did contact INS about -- you know, people who were being arrested, or were causing problems -- you know, and INS would be contacted. So there was a large Spanish speaking population there. And luckily, we did have several Troopers who were bilingual -- spoke Spanish.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh that's...

MS. SMITH:

We also had a police communications operator who spoke Spanish. So sometimes those people would have to be utilized during interrogations, and during interviews. Sometimes the Troopers would just respond to a home where the people did speak Spanish, and if we had someone at the station who could talk to them -- you know, part of the interview would just about be done by phone -- you know, going back and forth between the

Spanish speaking PCO, and the victim, or suspect, and the Trooper -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But generally -- you know, you would have somebody come into the station, and there would be someone there who would -- you know, interpret. A lot of times, people wanted their own relatives, or somebody like that to -- you know, interpret but -- you know, we didn't allow that, because -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, you wouldn't know, like...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...what was said.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So did you have the need to use an interpreter on occasion? Or do you know any Spanish? I guess, I can't assume that you don't know Spanish...

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't. I don't really -- no, I don't really. Not on any regular basis. I can remember working a midnight shift, and the Troopers going out to investigate an accident, and the accident -- at the accident, the driver was Spanish speaking. And he ended up going to the hospital, and the Troopers called me and said -- you know, "We're having problems, because" -- you know, "We don't have an interpreter," so on and so forth. And they were trying to use a Spanish-English dictionary to get words, and things like that. And at some point -- I don't know what they ended up saying to this guy, but I guess he fell out on the floor, and was crying, and all this kind of stuff -- you know, so it was a mess. So a lot of times the hospital did have interpreters, but for some reason that evening there wasn't anyone there, and so we did call around, and we were able to find someone to interpret for us.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

A couple more questions I had about Avondale. Oh, in one of the newspapers articles that you let me borrow, and read...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...there was something -- while you were a Sergeant, there was a raid, where you confiscated \$130,000 worth of drugs and weapons?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, I'm hoping that you can tell me a great story that's associated with that.

MS. SMITH:

No, I can't. No, it was...

INTERVIEWER:

And was that in Avondale, or was it...

MS. SMITH:

No, it was in Washington.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, it was after you transferred then?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. -- um-hum. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So what happened?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, it was in Washington. Actually, I don't recall -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh...

MS. SMITH:

I mean I really don't have a lot of memory about it.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that somewhat -- you know, just because it was kind of...

MS. SMITH:

You know, I don't think I was more -- I don't think I was that largely involved with the actual raid...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...as I was with the processing of everything once they came back to the station.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay. So why did -- what do you do when say, all that stuff comes in?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What's the process that you go through?

MS. SMITH:

Well, they had to be entered into evidence, of course. And the people who were arrested have to be photographed, and fingerprinted, and -- you know, statements taken and things like that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Like I said, I was more involved in that, than in the actual raid.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

A raid that I was involved in -- but I don't know if I was Sergeant at that time, I may have still been a Corporal -- that was different -- but it again, there were numerous warrants that they had for people, who were being arrested for selling drugs. And going

out early in the morning -- you know, knocking on doors, and making the arrests. Well at that time, I was serving at the -- and I can't remember where we were doing it -- but at the processing area. So as the people were brought in, we were doing the fingerprinting, and things like that. Well, I was assigned to do the strip searches, okay, of any -- you know, females who were brought in...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

...supposedly of any females that were brought in. But we did have a couple males come in, who had started going through a sexual change. So, they had breast -- you know, and they had been taking the hormones, and things like that, and they asked who -- they asked the guy first -- who did he want to be searched by -- did he want to be searched by a male, or did he want to be searched by me. And they said that they would prefer to be searched by me, because they considered themselves -- you know, as being women.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then asked me, did I have any objection to searching them, and I said, "No" -- you know, and if they weren't embarrassed about having breast bigger than mine -- you know, I wasn't going to be embarrassed either. So that was kind of -- it was different -
- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But that's truthful -- you know, I mean that is what I said -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- sure.

MS. SMITH:

...I mean because they -- you know, they weren't ashamed of it -- you know, and I mean -- you know, I'm not saying that they should've been, but it was different. It was definitely different -- you know, to -- you know, have a guy strip down and -- you know. I mean he was a guy from here down, but he was -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...a woman from there up, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, that's a unique experience I think.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Yeah, it was.

INTERVIEWER:

In doing this processing of both -- processing people through...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and processing evidence, when you turn in the evidence, what happens to it after you -- tag it, I guess, and ...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...it's marked, is there a huge warehouse full of guns and drugs, or where does it all go? Do you destroy it?

MS. SMITH:

Well, you have an evidence locker, or an evidence room right there at the station, where those things are kept. And they're going to be kept up to and including through -- you know, whatever type of trial...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, is held. And then the disposition of those weapons, or -- you know, dependent upon the outcome of the trial -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

I mean if -- you know, they're drugs and things like that, of course they're not going to be returned.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

You know, they're going to be destroyed. But -- you know, there's sometimes -- you know, somebody may have a gun -- you know, and -- you know, they win their case, and -- you know, it wasn't an illegal weapon so their -- you know, it's going to be returned to the person. Now the evidence room was also used for found property, and things like that also -- you know. But that's the reason why you're -- you know, tagging them and - - you know, you have to maintain like a chain of custody to show

that the gun, or whatever the object is, went from this person's hand, to that person's hands -- you know, and...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...the evidence is signed in and out, if it has to be taken out like for a hearing, or for a trial, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Was that your responsibility...

MS. SMITH:

No.

INTERVIEWER:

To keep track of all this...

MS. SMITH:

No, not in the evidence room.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

We did check the evidence locker, or there had to be someone in charge of the evidence locker to sign it in. Say if you're working a three to eleven shift, and the person who is the custodian of the evidence room -- which would be a large room -- you know, where you're going to have numerous items -- is not working

during that time, you had like a smaller area, which we called an evidence locker.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So that if something was brought in -- you know, I would have the keys for that, and -- you know, make sure that it was signed in, and things -- you know, and placed into the evidence locker. And then when the custodian would come back, he would place it into the evidence room.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, so it's just for safe keeping?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Was there ever a time that anything came up missing from the room? Or any -- in any experience that you ever had?

MS. SMITH:

Not in any experience that I've had.

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MS. SMITH:

No -- no. I mean -- you know, sometimes it becomes cumbersome, and sometimes things are -- I don't know, misplaced, I guess...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, because I mean there could be a lot of things in there.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

But in my experience, I was never -- you know, there when someone said -- you know, "There were drugs missing," or "There was gun missing," or anything like that -- no.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Okay. Let's go from -- unless you have anything else to say about Troop Washington, or -- yeah Troop Washington in '88 as a Sergeant coming back there?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

You were transferred then to Troop "B" -- no wait...

MS. SMITH:

Well, Washington is...

INTERVIEWER:

...not Troop Washington...

MS. SMITH:

Washington is the headquarters of Troop "B".

INTERVIEWER:

Troop "B", okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Washington is headquarters of Troop "B", so you'd just transferred to Finley, another substation of Troop "B"?

MS. SMITH:

Yes.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay, and...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. And there I was the patrol Sergeant.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

There, so...

INTERVIEWER:

First -- so the scheduling duties...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and things like that?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And that was in 1989...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...for the record...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- and that was a big job there.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

Because Finley is a station that -- I don't know if you're familiar with the area at all, but it patrols the parkway, which goes from basically one end of Allegheny County to the other end of Allegheny County. And Finley didn't have a large patrol area, as far as a township, or things like that. But I had the parkway, which was all around the city, and went out towards the airport -- the Pittsburgh Airport -- so there's a large -- you know, volume of traffic.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So, the reason why the job as a Sergeant was so big there, was because we had a lot of hearings. So there was a lot of scheduling to be done, as far as scheduling hearings, and court cases, and things like that -- you know. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

For traffic incidents?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

For traffic incidents. Finley had a small Criminal Investigation Unit. I think at the time there may have been three people, whereas there were probably 30 some on patrol -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Wow.

MS. SMITH:

And then there were people who did warrants, and things like that, picked up driver's licenses if someone was suspended -- you know, and didn't send theirs in -- you know, there were Troopers that would pick them up. Also Community Relations, but again, I was the patrol Sergeant, so I was in charge of the patrol function.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But that was the biggest part of the job -- was scheduling, because I mean -- you know, when you're scheduling 30 some people...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and also making sure that they go to all their hearings, and get their days off, and their vacations, and try to do the schedule fairly -- you know, so that everyone's happy basically -- and requests -- you know, everyone always had a request that -- you know, "I would like to have such and such a day off," or -- you know, "It's my turn to have off Christmas, because I didn't have it last year," or whatever -- you know, the case may be.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So that was a -- it was a big job.

INTERVIEWER:

And did you feel like -- I know in my experience I had to do a little bit of scheduling, for another job that I did. And I felt like -- like you said, it was just so difficult to make everyone's wishes come true. It just can't always happen.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And -- I mean did you feel like there was some -- you know, animosity towards you, because you're the one with the power with the schedule, and even though it's not your fault, or did they just understand that -- you know, you had a big job to do?

MS. SMITH:

There may have been a little sometimes -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

If someone didn't get what they wanted, but they were also able to trade with other Troopers -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

If someone had a three to eleven, and somebody else had a six to two, and they wanted to trade, they could trade with each other. I recall one funny incident, where a Trooper had wanted to participate, I think in basketball games, or something, and they were going to be on Sundays. So he had asked me -- you know, about scheduling him off on certain Sundays, or at least scheduling him a daylight on those Sundays, so he could play basketball in the afternoons, or in the evenings -- you know. So

I was able to do that, and -- you know, I didn't pay any attention to when basketball season was basically over -- you know, or anything like that, and so after I had scheduled him all these shifts that wanted basically, he came to me one day, and he says, "What, don't you want me to go to church anymore? I said like, "What are you talking about?" You know, and he said, "Well, you're giving me all these daylights on Sundays, so I can't go to church." And I said -- you know, "Didn't you come and request these certain hours" -- you know, "Certain shifts so that you could play basketball?" "Well, basketball's over" -- you know, "Well, did you ever think to come and say to me" -- you know, "I can" -- you know, "I would like now to work afternoons on Sundays so I can go to church?" Or -- you know, "Come in later on Sundays?" So, things like that -- you know, would get to be kind of frustrating -- exasperating. But, like I said -- and then when we spoke earlier about ten days on, and four days off, someone had come and asked me could they do that -- you know, could they do the ten days on, and four days off, and I accommodated them with that schedule.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But then some of the other Troopers came and complained, because they felt that this person was getting more weekends off than they were, so....

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, we ended up counting them, and they weren't getting anything more than the others -- you know. But I guess that goes back again to -- you know, what I said about a station where people are busy, that they don't nit-pick as much, and they have more camaraderie, and depend on each other more.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

And even though Finley was busy as -- like I said, traffic related incidents, and -- you know, accidents, and they also did quite a few escorts for dignitaries -- you know, if the President would come in, say to the...

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...yeah, to Pittsburgh...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- okay.

MS. SMITH:

...things like that. But they weren't investigating a lot of criminal type incidents -- you know, and they basically -- you know, except for the midnight's, worked alone, so -- you know, there wasn't a lot of getting backups for things. You know, sometimes on a traffic stop there would be, but like I said, I think that goes again back to...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, what else do have you got to do but count somebody's weekends -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, it affects the dynamic of...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...the way they worked together...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...or worked with you.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum. Yeah -- I mean I liked working there...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...again -- I moved again, and -- by this time I guess my kids are kind of spread out to -- you know, one's in Arizona, and one's in...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

...you know, working somewhere else -- you know, they're out of school, and have gone to college, and -- you know, out working now, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum -- good. Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So -- but my mother still lived in the house that I had in Uniontown, and I had an apartment in Pittsburgh, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Um-hum. And -- in 1990...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...just one year after Finley -- after you came to Finley, you were promoted to Lieutenant?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So describe that -- because a Lieutenant's no small promotion, that's...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...pretty big -- that's great.

MS. SMITH:

I was excited. I was excited.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I wasn't excited about travelling again, to Bethlehem this time.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But, I was excited about being promoted to Lieutenant. And I think it was some time in May, because I want to say it was like around Mother's Day, so it was like -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...a double treat like -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I was -- you know, like I said, excited.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, looking forward to it -- not looking forward to the drive, but again, looking forward to something different. When I had mentioned about Finley and doing the schedule, I remember just before I was ready to go, apparently some of the magistrates -- you know, had found out that I was being transferred, and things

like that, so they called before I left to schedule hearings -- you know. And I scheduled like -- I don't know how many hearings, I can't even -- you know, count how many hearings, but they said - - you know, "We're going to be getting somebody new, and we're going to have to go through" -- you know, "Trying to" -- you know, "Talk to them about the scheduling," and all that kind of stuff -- you know. So -- you know, and I mean I was so filled up with schedules I took them home -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...took the schedule home and worked on it -- you know, like before I left, to get everybody scheduled -- you know. But -- so like I said -- so, going to Bethlehem was nice -- you know. The promotion was good.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. All these tests, I mean can you -- or was there -- there was a test, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. -- um-hum

INTERVIEWER:

Can you describe the testing process, and what that was all about, or just -- was it just a test?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, it was just a test.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, I really don't remember too much about the oral -- like interviews.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But -- you know, you did the written test also, and -- you know, it covered all the basic things. You know, criminal law, and traffic law...

INTERVIEWER:

Was it...

MS. SMITH:

...criminal procedure -- asking you about criminal procedure -- you know, how long do you have after you get a search warrant, how -- you know, -- you know, what hours can you serve a

warrant, and things like that. Domestic violence issues, and things like that. And different -- like I said, laws and criminal procedure, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Is it getting increasingly harder, from your first test -- was to become a Corporal, and a Sergeant, Lieutenant? Did it feel like...

MS. SMITH:

I don't know -- I don't know...

INTERVIEWER:

...with your experiences, like...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I'm -- I don't...

INTERVIEWER:

...even preparing you for it almost?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I think so.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you?

MS. SMITH:

And I don't think it was getting harder. I think probably the emphasis maybe is put on different things...

INTERVIEWER:

True.

MS. SMITH:

...because of what rank you're going to. Because you're dealing with more personnel issues maybe as you go -- you know, go up in rank. You're dealing more with maybe grievances, and complaint procedures, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Where as a Corporal, you wouldn't have -- you know, done a lot of that -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Well...

MS. SMITH:

I recall -- but this was when I was a Sergeant, I think -- when I took the first test for Sergeant I failed it, so I took that twice.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And the only thing -- like I said, I don't remember a lot about the oral interviews, but I can remember getting angry at the interviewers, because they were doing like situations -- you know. If a Trooper did certain things, and -- you know, they wanted to look at what you were going to do as far as discipline, or how you were going to take corrective action, and things like that. And at that time, the interviewers were role playing, and they were supposed to be kind of combative with me as the Sergeant -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

...and the role that I was playing as the Sergeant. So as they were getting combative, like I was getting mad, too -- you know, so I kind of failed that.

INTERVIEWER:

That was -- wow...

MS. SMITH:

It didn't show that I had much control, or...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

You know, but -- but -- you know, the thing was I knew I failed when I came out, so I wasn't disappointed -- you know, or whatever, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm sure it happens to everyone at some point...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

That's interesting. Well, where -- were the tests given in your local area where you were stationed, or did you have to travel to Harrisburg, or to here -- to the Academy to take it? Do you remember?

MS. SMITH:

The Sergeant's test I took here at the Academy. The Corporal's test I don't recall where I took it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

The Lieutenant's test was taken in the western part of the State, I believe at the Southwest Training Center I believe. And then the Captain's and Major's tests I'm not sure, maybe here at the Academy.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I'm really not sure.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. You were given a completely new job obviously, as a Lieutenant.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

It was a completely new job, so...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...what is that job, and how was Bethlehem for you?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Bethlehem was good.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

As far as the job change, now I had a patrol Sergeant -- you know, as my subordinate.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then he had the Corporals, and the Troopers. The main part of the job I guess was -- well, first of all let me say the Sergeant did a lot of work. He did the schedule, and things like that. He had the feeling, I guess, that he ran the patrol section -- you know. Which -- you know, it can sometimes be good -- you know, I mean you want to be in the know, but at the same time, I wasn't trying to step on his toes as to the things that he had been doing all along. You know, when I transferred there, he came to me and he said, "Lieutenant, this is what I've been doing, would you like to take this over?" You know, "If you've been doing it, and it's working" -- you know, "Why would I" -- you know, "Take it away from you?" So there were things that Lieutenants at other stations may have been doing that -- or at other headquarters may have been doing, that I wasn't doing. But overall, it was just overseeing the patrol area -- you know, what the Sergeant was

doing -- people would come to me with complaints, if they didn't get what they needed from the Sergeant, or whatever -- you know, and I may have to talk to him about it, or find out the reason why things couldn't be done the way they wanted, or whatever -- you know. But as patrol Lieutenant, you also had to endorse -- like fatal accidents, and things like that, review any fatal accidents that came through, and look at -- you know, whether arrests were made, and things like that. And just be -- again -- you know, ensure that there was scheduling, ensure that the shifts were covered -- also involved in some training -- having classes, and making sure that the Troopers were aware of different changes, whether they were in criminal law, or vehicle code, or whatever -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum -- right.

MS. SMITH:

...and...

INTERVIEWER:

Things coming down from the upper echelon?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- uh-hum. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...yeah, special orders that might come through -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- right.

MS. SMITH:

...we would have a class, and do that. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But those were the main type of duties and responsibilities.

INTERVIEWER:

At Bethlehem, I'm wondering if there's just one Lieutenant, or are there more than one?

MS. SMITH:

No, there were three.

INTERVIEWER:

Three?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Patrol, staff and crime.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And then were there any Captains?

MS. SMITH:

Yes, there was...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

...one Captain.

INTERVIEWER:

One Captain -- okay. All right. How did you interact with the other two Lieutenants, and do you remember who they were?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. One was Lieutenant Warsavage (phonetic), he was the crime Lieutenant. And the other Lieutenant was Billy Ray Williams (phonetic), and we -- I think we all interacted well -- yeah. Lieutenant Warsavage was already there when I arrived,

and Billy Ray arrived -- we came at the same time, and so Lieutenant Warsavage was already there. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Did you get a feel for what you needed to do as a Lieutenant by modeling other Lieutenants, that -- when you were a Sergeant -- you know, of course you had Lieutenants.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

That were overseeing your work.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel that you used any of them as a model -- and that you maybe really respected the work that they were doing, and that sort of thing? Or did you kind of just do it your own way?

MS. SMITH:

Probably a little bit of both.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I think because the circumstances and the situations change, from one station to another -- you know. And of course the personnel's going to change. So you kind of get to know the people, and know -- basically I guess, what their mind set is, and -- you know, and you go in not looking maybe to change things right away -- you know, you kind of want to get the feel for what's going on, and then, if you see things that -- like I said, if things are working, there's no reason to change them -- you know. But if you think that you can improve upon something, then you make some changes, or even maybe try something -- and let people know -- you know, "We're going to try this, because I think it's going to work better." And if it doesn't -- you know, not be too prideful to change it back and say, "Hey" -- you know, "Your way was better." As a Lieutenant to, you were in charge of watching overtime, and -- you know, checking time sheets, and things like that so -- you know, those were big areas -- you know. Money's always a big area, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...you make sure people -- but so, I guess -- you know, like I said, I tried both -- you know, tried some newer things, and took

some experiences that I had already had with other Lieutenants -
- because I think throughout my career, I did have some good
supervisors -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And during the time that I was at Bethlehem, I also was
transferred within the Troop to Trevoise, and became the Station
Commander at Trevoise.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, wow -- okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, I think that was after I had been there maybe about a year or
so.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Or maybe not even that long. The situation arose where the
Lieutenant at Trevoise retired. There was a newly promoted
Lieutenant who wanted to go there, but the Captain decided that
he wanted this person to come to headquarters, instead of going
to Trevoise.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, he asked for volunteers to go to Trevoise, and no one volunteered, and as I was the junior Lieutenant, I ended up being sent.

INTERVIEWER:

So you didn't volunteer either?

MS. SMITH:

No. No, I didn't volunteer either.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And when I got there, I had two new Sergeants, and -- here we have another station that I felt at the time, wasn't -- you know, real busy. They had a small area to patrol as far as a highway -- 95, and not a lot of township area to patrol. During the time that I was there, there was a borough I believe that no longer had a police department, so we took that over, so they had that one particular borough -- you know, but again -- oh, and also next to the Trevoise' Station there was a YDC -- a youth development place, so we handled incidents there at the juvenile detention

center. And had -- you know, quite a few incidents over there -- runaways, assaults -- you know, where the kids would be acting up, and acting crazy.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So we had a lot of incidents over there. But when you talk about change, that was a station that I went to, and did observe them for a while, and thought that there were some changes necessary.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And they were resentful...

INTERVIEWER:

Oh.

MS. SMITH:

...of the changes, but -- like I said, I had two Sergeants, and when we went there, one Sergeant was supposed to be staff, one was supposed to be patrol, and I was the Lieutenant. And after observing for a while, I decided that the Sergeant who had been working as staff, would take over the crime function,

because it was kind of in disarray at the time that we arrived. So we made some changes, and things like that. And the guys were kind of used to a lot over overtime, and cut back on that, and so there were some things -- you know. So they -- I think they were pretty glad to see me leave.

INTERVIEWER:

You were pulling in the reins...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...and they didn't like it.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. And like I said -- again, when you asked about being strict -- you know, I think there are certain areas -- particularly when it applies to regulations that are in gray areas -- you know. This is when you're allowed to have overtime -- you know, this is how much overtime you're allowed, this is when you can be called in, this is when -- you know, certain things are supposed to happen. So in those areas, I think -- you know, I at least felt that I should follow the rules and regulations. And you can -- again, like I said, be lenient -- you know, on other things.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, like I said, I think they were glad to see me go back to Bethlehem -- which I did, and then the newly promoted Lieutenant, who had wanted to go to Trevoise originally, did end up going there.

INTERVIEWER:

I wonder if he had problems? Do you know?

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't.

INTERVIEWER:

I just...

MS. SMITH:

I mean, we were definitely different personalities.

INTERVIEWER:

So you were definitely different people?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm just -- I'm wondering if -- you know, obviously a Trooper -- like you said, I mean the way you describe it, you're giving them less overtime, you're -- you know, rearranging things so that they function better, and that sort of thing...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But were there -- had they ever interacted with a woman -- you know, as their supervisor before...

MS. SMITH:

Oh, I don't...

INTERVIEWER:

...so I wonder if that may have been a piece of it?

MS. SMITH:

...yeah, I doubt it -- I doubt if they had.

INTERVIEWER:

It...

MS. SMITH:

Maybe some of them had been at other stations, and had a female -- you know, supervisor, particularly maybe a Corporal.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I don't know, most of the people who were there, had been there for a while. Again, because it was a slower moving station, and a lot of people wanted to be there, and they didn't want to leave. Now we also had a Driver's Exam Unit there at the time --

I don't know if they still do, but -- so we had that going on also, and there was a Corporal in charge of that, and -- you know. I mean, he knew what he was doing, and there wasn't a lot of supervision that had to be done with him. But like when I mentioned the overtime, one of the things that I did was -- and I don't know if the regulations are still the same, but if a person was called in, and they weren't working, they were entitled to four hours of overtime. Now we didn't have a midnight shift there, so if something happened, a person would be called in from home to take care of an accident, or whatever the case may be. And the Troopers prior to that would come in, handle an accident, which might take them an hour, and they would put in for the four hours.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh -- wow.

MS. SMITH:

Okay? So that was kind of like -- you know, I didn't think that that was working very well. And it may have come up because there was a complaint about something else. Right now I don't recall.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So I said, "Well" -- you know, "The regulations say you're entitled to four hours if you're called in" -- you know, "You're working an hour, and you're taking the four hours, and if you continue" -- and like I said, right now I can't remember how they were doing it -- "Then we have work that can be done for those four hours" -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...it doesn't say what the work has to be, it can be -- you know, "You can be filing, you can be doing this, or you could be doing that, you could be cleaning the station" -- you know. But like I said, there was something that prompted this action. It wasn't just -- you know, out of the clear blue. There was some other things going on at the same time.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

You know, so -- but -- so, when you ask about the other Lieutenants, I don't know if they went back to the old

way, or not.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, when I changed someone's position, I went through the Captain, and told him the reason why I wanted to do it, and told him -- you know, what I felt, and how I looked at the problems that they were having at the time -- you know. And there were line inspections -- you know, and a Lieutenant would come to the station and do a line inspection. That was to make sure reports were being done properly, they were being filed properly, everything at the station -- because they wanted uniformity...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...throughout the State, so that...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...if you went to one station, and you wanted to find certain things, it would be the same at any other station.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, this place wasn't -- you know, doing that. And so when a line inspection would come through, we would have a lot of discrepancies, and a lot of things that had to be corrected.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So, I think those types of things are indicators of -- you know, the problems that you're having.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And so when changes were made -- and -- you know, people don't necessarily like changes, particularly if it's working for them -- you know, it's not working for anybody else, and it's not working for the station, but -- you know, this is working for me, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Was the Captain backing you up on all the things that you were deciding to do? I mean he wasn't there -- present there, I mean he was in Bethlehem, right?

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

But -- you know, every time you would go to him and say, "This is my plan, this is what I want to do," he was just....

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, he did. Yeah -- yeah, he did. I mean, because the Captain to -- I mean he was aware of -- you know, the problems. He was seeing the reports that came through -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

He was aware -- for instance, when I said about changing the Sergeant who had been staff, that was a position as it was -- when myself and the other two Sergeants went there -- there was a staff Sergeant, and there was a patrol Sergeant, and there was a Corporal in charge of crime. The Corporal had decided -- like I said, we had a juvenile detention center -- a lot of the kids who were incarcerated there were from the Philadelphia area.

And the Corporal had taken it upon himself to make the decision that he would not enter these Philadelphia runaways into NCIC, or into the computer. He would have it done by Philadelphia, because these kids were from Philadelphia, okay?

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And that may not have been so bad -- I mean that definitely wasn't the way it was supposed to be done, and that wasn't the procedure. But then to ask, "How do you follow up?" You know -- there wasn't any follow up. So you kind of just never knew what happened to these kids -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right, because they're not keeping any records on them.

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right. So, that was one of the reasons why this change was made, where the Sergeant who was supposed to be in staff, became the crime Sergeant. And he went through, and -- you know, did the things he was supposed to do, and -- you know, took care of the problem. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Was that -- well, two questions -- one, was that Sergeant then responsible for staff and crime both? And two, what did the Corporal do then?

MS. SMITH:

If I recall correctly, the Corporal ended up doing the staff things -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay. Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

So they just switched roles.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And I think after we all left, I think he may have gone back to being the crime Corporal -- yeah, but I'm not sure. Because all of us were from somewhere else, you know. The other two Sergeants, they were also from the western part of the State. So

one left and went to another station in the Troop, and became the Station Commander, and I believe the other on transferred back home, before we did -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

I mean was that a little bit frustrating to -- you know, to go in there, and give so much effort to try to make positive change, and -- you know, to see that if only they just gave it some time, they could see that these changes were going -- you know, become fruitful. And they would eventually see that it would be good overall -- better...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...is what I'm trying to say...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...and then -- you know, to see it, just kind of go back to the way it was before...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

...was that frustrating?

MS. SMITH:

Well -- you know, I don't know if it went back to the way it was before, because I don't know what changes were made after I left.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Like I said, I thought that that one person went back to the same job.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But, I don't know -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

How bad it went back to being...

INTERVIEWER:

Yes. All right, well I think that's where we're going....

INTERVIEWER:

We're back.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

My name is Shelly Levins. I'm here with retired Major Virginia Smith. We're here at the Pennsylvania State Police Academy, doing the Oral History Project for the State Police, and today is July 10, 2006 -- Monday, and this is tape four in our series. So welcome back.

MS. SMITH:

Thank you.

INTERVIEWER:

Thank you. When we left off, we were talking about some of the issues, and things that were happening at Trevose.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Did I pronounce that correctly?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. You were the Lieutenant there, and was it due to some of these issues that you decided to transfer, or were there other reasons?

MS. SMITH:

No, it wasn't because of the issues.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Like I said, I was originally stationed at Bethlehem.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Went to Trevoise, because they wanted me to go there.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And when they decided that the newly promoted Lieutenant could come to Trevoise, then I returned back to Bethlehem. Because really, I had an apartment 10 minutes from the Bethlehem Station.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And when I transferred to Trevoise, I was driving -- you know, and hour or so, to go -- so I to wanted to go back to Bethlehem.

INTERVIEWER:

Gladly.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

That's one thing I've never -- I've always gotten apartments closed to where I lived -- even though sometimes it was an hardship and expense, because I still had my house -- you know, in Uniontown...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...still making mortgage payments, but I always tried to live close to where I worked, just -- you know, I just didn't like the drive -- I don't like the drive.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Which got easier with a promotion, right? I mean as far as financially...

MS. SMITH:

Oh, yeah. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

...being -- um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...financially -- yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Now what would you say -- I'm not even sure what it is now, but what is the percentage jump in salary from promotion to promotion?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- I'm not sure.

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MS. SMITH:

I'm not sure. No.

INTERVIEWER:

Did it feel like a pretty significant amount though at the time?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, it did. Yeah -- yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Let me think -- when you came back to Bethlehem, were you again Patrol Section Commander?

MS. SMITH:

Yes -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. So you took on the same duties as before?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Was anything different at all, or did you just kind of fall back into step with your old routine, and with your Captain, and everyone...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah, I would say -- yeah, fell back into step. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. And if you could for me, describe the next time that you transferred, which I have here in my notes, that was in 1992.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. In 1992, I was asked to be the -- at that time Affirmative Action Officer at Department Headquarters. The Major who was currently in the position was retiring, and they were looking for

someone to take that position. And he, the Major -- it was Major Brooks (phonetic), approached me about it, and asked me -- you know, did I think I would be interested, and told me a little about the job, and things like that. Again, wanting the challenge, wanting to move, wanting to get closer to Pittsburgh -- in the back of my mind, it's always been there to return to Pittsburgh.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But I never made it back. And of course, as I went up in rank, the likelihood of that happening -- you know, was slim, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So when he talked to me about it, and -- you know, I told him that yeah -- that I would like to do it. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So that's how I ended up applying for the position, and getting the position as the Affirmative Action Officer.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your experience with Major Brooks before? How did he know of your abilities, and that you would be a good fit for the job?

MS. SMITH:

I mean, I had met him, and he had come up to Troop "M" several times -- to Bethlehem. As a matter of fact, at one point he had been Troop Commander I believe there -- at Troop "M". And so I had -- you know, met and seen him several times. And I'm sure he probably talked to a few other people, and -- you know, talked to the Captain about -- you know, what kind of job I was doing, and things like that -- you know, see if there were any complaints from anyone relative to my work performance, and -- you know, and he probably looked at performance evaluations, and things like that. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And -- I mean, do you find it somewhat curious that they're grooming you for this position -- he held this position, and he's a Major...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and here, you're a Lieutenant, and you're being groomed for it...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...so that difference in rank is pretty big.

MS. SMITH:

I don't -- you know, I mean I didn't look at it like that at the time...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...as being groomed for it -- you mean because I was Major when I left? Is that what you mean?

INTERVIEWER:

No, no...

MS. SMITH:

Oh.

INTERVIEWER:

...that a Major held this position, and now their asking a Lieutenant to hold the position...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...which is a jump...

MS. SMITH:

Right.

INTERVIEWER:

...for -- to know -- I guess when I think of the duties that you hold as you move through rank, you're prepared for them by your previous rank...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So -- you know, for them to think -- you know, "While she's Lieutenant, she has what we need for this position"...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...even though a Major held it before. I'm wondering about that.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. I don't know if it depends as much on rank, as maybe personality...

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

...as the fact that as the Affirmative Action Officer, maybe they thought a woman would be a good fit...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...a minority...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and -- I don't -- and someone that did have a rank -- you know. So those three things combined I think probably fit into the picture of what they wanted for the Affirmative Action Officer. And like I said, personality -- I think I'm a pretty -- you know, level headed person. I don't get too excited usually -- but that has come with, I think being in the State Police and learning to control some of my temper and things that I used to have problems with -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Well, then they...

MS. SMITH:

And being obnoxious...

INTERVIEWER:

In that oral interview...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...you're in a different (inaudible).

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

So I think those things -- those characteristics are things that probably they were looking for. And I would think that at that time I was the only black, female Lieutenant.

INTERVIEWER:

I think so.

MS. SMITH:

I'm sure there were males, and I believe a couple of male Captains, also at that time, but -- so, you know, I kind of think that's the reason why I was offered...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and I really don't know who else they talked to. I don't -- you know, if I did know at the time, I don't recall now, if there were other people that were interested or not.

INTERVIEWER:

What did you know of the job before you went into it? What kinds of things did you know about it?

MS. SMITH:

I really didn't know a lot about it.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

There were regulations in the AR Manual, that told about the position, told what the duties and responsibilities were. And then talking with Major Brooks, and finding out -- you know, about the job. But I think, again, when I talk about personal characteristics and things like that, someone who believes that they can be fair,

in handling different situations and incidents, a person who can have empathy, with that -- you know, a complaint may be. Be able to see where there may be discrimination, or whether it's actually just a personality conflict between people -- things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And have some investigative experience. Even though when the time came, I did not investigate allegations, because that was done through Internal Affairs.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Where as in other state agencies, the affirmative action officer actually investigates allegations of discrimination, or of sexual harassment, or whatever the case may be. With us, it was -- you know, done by Internal Affairs, so I didn't actually investigate the complaints.

INTERVIEWER:

So you would just feed them the information that you had gathered about the complaint, and they would then

go about the investigation?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. And not all incidents had to be investigated. After talking to the person who was making the complaint, they would basically decide, based on how serious the allegations were, or whatever, whether or not there was going to be an investigation done, or whether they wanted an investigation done. I mean, if a person came, and made the complaint that something inappropriate was said to them, it may not be necessary to have a full fledged investigation -- you know, the complainant may just want the person talked to, counseled -- you know, and told -- you know, this is inappropriate, and -- you know, you're going to have to stop doing this. And if it occurs again in the future, then there will be an investigation, and there will be disciplinary action taken.

INTERVIEWER:

So if there's no investigation, is there then no discipline, or could there potentially be discipline

without an investigation?

MS. SMITH:

There would not have been any discipline. There could be counseling the person -- again like I said, told about whatever the inappropriate behavior was...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but there wouldn't be any discipline.

INTERVIEWER:

So it was just kind of a slap on the wrist and...

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

...don't do it again...

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

...kind of thing.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. But again -- like I said, that's according to how serious the allegation was -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Did it work? That you found?

MS. SMITH:

I think in most cases it did, but again like I said, you're looking at things that weren't of a severe nature to begin with...

INTERVIEWER:

True.

MS. SMITH:

...when you're looking at those types of things -- you know. And sometimes people just weren't aware of what they were saying, or weren't aware that someone was going to be offended.

INTERVIEWER:

Kind of just...

MS. SMITH:

I mean, even for myself -- you know, I know prior to some of the sexual harassment regulations and things like that, I said things that were inappropriate -- you know, but you have to stand back and say, "Hey" -- you know, "People are offended by this," or -- you know, "This isn't appropriate for the workplace," or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And so I think -- like I said, that some people just weren't aware of what they were said, or that people would be offended. Now at the same time we were conducting classes on sexual harassment, on discrimination, about -- you know, Affirmative Action, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And -- you know, telling people, "We are telling you that this is wrong" -- you know, and laying it out -- you know. "If you're making jokes of a sexual nature, and things like that" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Or racial.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Right. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. There's a lot of questions that I have about this. One, just touching on the different types of complaints that you would receive -- race or racial, sexual, what other kinds of things would people complain about to you? Or what was it your duty to respond to -- which complaints?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Well, according to the Civil Rights Act, it was on discrimination that would be based on race, sex, national origin, gender, sexual orientation later on was put in...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...by the Governor, as far as Pennsylvania -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

You couldn't discriminate against a person because of their sexual orientation, and also religion. So, any of those -- you know, would be covered by the Affirmative Action Office, which was later to Equal Employment Opportunity, so I'll probably refer to it as that, because that's what it was most of the time.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

But when I first started, it was called Affirmative Action.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. So any of those areas fell under the Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. What would you say was the most common of those categories you just described?

MS. SMITH:

Sexual harassment and racial discrimination.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

We had a few that were age -- oh, and then also the Americans with Disabilities Act came into play at some point.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And so we had some investigations, or allegations made of people feeling that they were discriminated against because of

their disability, or people wanting a reasonable accommodation -
- maybe not that they were discriminated against, but they were
asking for a reasonable accommodation, and maybe it wasn't
granted, and so they would -- you know, come forward and say --
you know, "This is what I need to be able to perform my job,"
so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right. There was one thing there was a question on -- okay, this
is the -- in one of the articles that you gave me to look over,
there's this quote that I wanted to talk to you about, that you --
this is something that you said in the article, and it is -- "I think
being a black female in this position" -- in the position of Equal
Opportunity Employer...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

"Is good." "I can understand the female and minority
perspectives." "But I also don't want to see white Troopers
discriminated against."

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And what I'm curious about, is in these categories that you're talking about -- discrimination racially and sexually -- sexual harassment...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...if it really did follow for the most part what we would think of stereotypes of whites discriminating against blacks, and men sexually harassing women -- or if there were occasions where it would cross the other way, and what that was like to have to -- you know, look on both sides of the coin?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you talk about that at all?

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall any incidents where a white male Trooper said he was discriminated against because of his race.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

But I did have an occasion or two, where a white male Trooper felt he was being sexually harassed. You know, inappropriate things being said, a female Trooper or Corporal making a pass at him, things like that. Also talked to several white male Troopers relative to reasonable accommodations and a disability.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I don't recall any based on religion -- so those are the areas that I can recall -- you know, having incidents. And there weren't a lot of them, so generally it was the stereotypical I guess, type of complaints, where -- you know, you're having racial complaints from minority Troopers, or civilians.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And sexual harassment mainly from females against males.

Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And I think that you were right to say that -- I mean, I think that when you said, "Being a black female in this position is good," because -- I mean, or did you feel that people were able

to -- or felt more comfortable, more open in coming to you, than they would say with a white male, because they felt that maybe you would understand?

MS. SMITH:

I think that's true, and I think people generally don't believe that white males understand.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

I mean even today I'm not sure. I can give you an example that - the church that I go to, we have a small group -- and it's a large church, so they broke people up into small groups -- that you could join small groups, so people get to know each other, because the church has like 3,000, 4,000 members. So in this small group that I participate in, I am the only black person, okay?

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And sometimes we'll be talking about different things, and I'll give my perspective. And just last night when we met, I said, "Well, I'm going to have to bring in my racial thing," and the leader of

the group said, "You know, we're glad that you always do" -- you know, "Because we're not sure that any of us have ever had the same type of experience" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And what I was talking about was -- we were talking about feeling ostracized, or feeling discriminated against, or whatever. And I was mentioning that when I had transferred to Uniontown, and was looking for a place to live, I ended up renting a house in a predominately -- well not predominately -- an all white neighborhood.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And that I didn't have really any friend in the neighborhood -- you know. I did end up being friends with two people that lived in the area. But my kids made friends, and -- you know, they never felt that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And then I went on to relate that later on I found out that the lady who I rented the house from, had rented to me, because she didn't like the neighbors, and she thought that she was getting back at that them by putting -- you know, someone black in the neighborhood. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Geese -- wow.

MS. SMITH:

Again so -- you know, you do have a different perspective -- you know, and that's what the leader of the group was saying -- you know, that none of us have ever felt this -- you know, in the same way -- you know, we may have been discriminated against for something else, or -- I mean people get discriminated against for a variety of reasons -- because you didn't go to a certain school, or -- you know, whatever -- you don't belong to a certain club, or things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

It can be a wide variety of reasons -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Suppose any...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah -- sure.

MS. SMITH:

So I do think, like I said, being a black female in that position did give a perspective that a white male would not have had.

INTERVIEWER:

Right, and you could relate.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Because I think -- you know, I don't think I've faced a lot of discrimination with the State Police, but I do think there has been some -- you know. And it's not something that -- and we may have discussed it before -- it's just one of those things where you say, "Hey" -- you know, "You just chock that up to the experience," and -- you know, you move on, and the person who did the discriminating isn't going to -- you know, change your life really -- you know, that's there problem -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And you were able to take that attitude -- let it -- water rolling off your back -- you know...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...okay, I'm just going to move forward -- better than them anyway, or whatever.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

But did you ever feel that there was this network -- this person, this Equal Opportunity Officer, that you could go to? Or did that position even exist when things were happening for you, say when you were a Trooper at Uniontown -- was there anyone there, that you could...

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. At some point there was a lady who was there...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...a civilian person. Her name was Christine Carter (phonetic). And I believe she was the Affirmative Action Officer immediately

before Major Brooks. So I knew that she was there, and I did talk to her once -- but she had called me. I didn't call her with a complaint. She had called me just to see how things were, and she knew that I was kind of out there...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...and I believe that was when I had gone to my first station, at Franklin. And -- you know, and just talked to me, and did let me know that she was there -- you know. But like I said, I never called in any complaint.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum -- yeah. But it wasn't because that wasn't there for you, it was just because it's not something that you -- wasn't your personality to do that.

MS. SMITH:

Right.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And maybe because of the circumstances -- the incidents -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...they weren't -- you know, huge things. You know, something -- like I said, that wasn't going to change my life really.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So -- didn't feel a need for a complaint, but -- you know, if someone else had been in the same situation, and -- and I did have Troopers -- minority Troopers call me about positions that they hadn't gotten, that they thought that they should've gotten, and that's one of time that I felt that I was discriminated against, because of a position I put in for that I did not get.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But for me -- you know, it was -- I don't know -- it wasn't a big deal I guess at the time -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But yet -- and still, I understood the reasons why the Troopers called me when they felt that they didn't get the position that they wanted, or that they had applied for. Excuse me.

INTERVIEWER:

So let's say, just as an example, you get that call -- a Trooper saying to you -- you know, "I didn't get this position," is then your next -- what's your next step? Is that something that is investigated, or what happened?

MS. SMITH:

In most cases, it would be to find out why he didn't get the position -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Everyone thinks -- first of all, that they're qualified -- you know, for the position, or I guess you wouldn't apply for it, so there can be different reasons why you didn't get the position, or it could be that you were discriminated against -- you know, and you didn't get the position, because they did prefer to have a white male in the position. So looking at what steps were taken to qualify the person -- you know, what was necessary for you to get this position? What did you or didn't you do, that would keep you

from having that position, and then looking at who was chosen, and what did that person do, or not do, that made them -- if you want to use the word qualified, or suitable -- that made them more suitable than the person who did not get the position.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm just wondering -- when you're saying that -- you know, was it whether they really weren't qualified, or was it whether they were being discriminated against, would they ever admit that that was occurring -- the discrimination? Or would it be something that would have to be determined, and then just -- this is what this was, whether you are going to admit it or not?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. It would have to be determined.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

For instance, if you applied for a position, and we'll say that they did some type of oral interview -- look at the answers that were given, because you should be -- the interviewer should be keeping notes of the different answers that were given. So look at the answers that were given. If there was a written test given,

look at that, and see how the persons who took the test -- see how they scored -- you know. So look at all the different facets of what made one person more suitable for the job than the other person.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And if it looks like it all comes out equal, then -- you know, what was the determining factor -- you know. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Right. Um-hum. One thing I'm wondering about -- you were talking about how you needed to -- you know, host these classes, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

About what's appropriate, and what's totally inappropriate...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and that sort of thing, and...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...I think it's safe to say that older generations just were raised differently.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Grew up in a different world, and -- you know, the changes in society were creating this more conscientious attitude towards sexual discrimination, and sexual harassment, and racial discrimination.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

The question that I have for you, is whether the older generations of Troopers, that you're trying to give these classes to, if they were receptive to this message, and this -- I don't know how sudden it was, that now the State Police are trying to be more conscientious with this, but -- I'm hoping you can talk about that a little bit.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. I mean, some of them were receptive and some of them weren't.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, you always go back to relating of course, "If this was your daughter," or, "If this was your sister," or, "If this was your mother," that these remarks were being made to how would you feel -- you know. So sometimes you could kind of get the point across using those examples. And then sometimes it just came down to, "I am telling you that this is inappropriate." "You may not see it, but I am telling you, you cannot say these things -- you cannot tell these types of jokes, you cannot pass around this kind of literature, you cannot have" -- for instance, someone had like a pin-up type calendar in his office -- an investigator -- a criminal investigator, in the office. And he was told to take it down, and he wanted to argue about it, and the -- I believe Lieutenant or Sergeant -- I can't remember now who called me, said -- you know, "I am telling this person to take this down, and he's telling me this is his office," and so on and so forth. Well first of all, it's not his office -- you know, it's a State Police office.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And he's saying that -- you know, "Nobody goes in there," this, that, and the other. And I'm saying, "Well, someone may end up going in there and be offended by the picture" -- you know, "You have people that are coming in to be interviewed, whether it be a victim, or a suspect, or whoever" -- you know, "Or even say the custodial person" -- you know, "Who comes in to clean -- if it happens to be a woman, may be offended by the type of pictures that you have up on the wall." So even though he wasn't happy with it, he was told to take the pictures down. So again, sometimes it just comes down to "This is what we're going to allow, and this is what we're not." "And even though you may or may not agree, we're telling you that this is where the line is," and -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Deal with it.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, basically deal with it.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And in that situation, is the process that you tell that person exactly what you just said to me? You'd give them a call on the phone and say, "Okay, this is why this is wrong," or is it a letter, or how does that work?

MS. SMITH:

It's been done a combination of ways...

INTERVIEWER:

To get that -- you know, to them...

MS. SMITH:

...you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Both by the person's supervisor, or -- you know, sometimes I've talked to the person myself. For instance, I had a girl make a complaint about a male trooper -- and this was a sexual harassment thing -- just that he was asking her out all the time -- you know, and she had said, "No," numerous times. So, I called and talked to him, and said -- you know, "Hey" -- you know, "Knock it off" -- you know, "She's not going out with you, she's told you that, and if you continue then there will be an investigation done, and that would result in actually formal discipline" -- you know, whether it was a suspension, or whatever. So it was handled a variety of ways, depending on the situation, the circumstances, depending on the supervisor, because sometimes -- you know, supervisors don't want to do

what they're supposed to do, and didn't want to take the necessary action, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Sure.

MS. SMITH:

...sometimes I would do that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And as you're describing this, and talking about -- you know, discipline may be taken -- I'm hoping that you can give us the spectrum of discipline, like what's -- for the -- you know, after an investigation is done, what's the smallest amount of discipline, and then obviously, I'm -- well, not obviously, but I'm guessing that the highest discipline is to be dishonorably discharged, right?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. So can you talk about what the lowest one is, and then what's in between for discipline? For something like this.

MS. SMITH:

Well, it's -- and I think it did run that whole spectrum of...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...verbal reprimand, or counseling, up to and including, termination.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

For different types of incidents -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

And what else would happen though? Like what's one step up from verbal reprimand?

MS. SMITH:

A person could be suspended, for a certain amount of time.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And then -- you know, like I said, it would be termination.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So there really isn't all that many things. There's really only a few levels of discipline, and not.

MS. SMITH:

Right, right. Right -- just depending on how many days a person's going to be suspended, from one day to -- at that time, I think it was 30 days you could be suspended...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but if it called for more than that, then termination was going to be indicated. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Okay. The other thing -- is it -- in Major Brooks position, and I guess I don't want to assume anything here -- and I do want everything for the record -- that Major Brooks was a white male?

MS. SMITH:

No, he was a black male.

INTERVIEWER:

Black male?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay. Good.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm glad that I didn't just assume that -- and I don't know if there would be any records kept of this, but I'm curious to whether there was a surge in the number of complaints that are coming to you, once you take on the position? Maybe, even especially for sexual harassment?

MS. SMITH:

I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:

No?

MS. SMITH:

You know, I can't say whether there was a surge. I think...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...sexual harassment -- maybe there was. Because I think nationwide -- you know, more sexual harassment cases were coming forward. Because the Anita Hill thing -- and Clarence

Thomas -- excuse me -- had happened not too long before that. So sexual harassment was put more in the forefront than it had been previously.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I think the State Police were doing more to combat sexual harassment -- having the regulations in place, and things like that, and doing the classes, and saying, "These are the things that are appropriate," and making people aware. And so, people who felt that they were being sexually harassed -- particularly women -- you know, or -- you know, the majority of them being women, felt that it was okay to -- you know, make a complaint, whereas previously they may not have made the complaint.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. And what kinds of shoes did you have to fill with Major Brooks? Did you feel -- were they big shoes to fill?

MS. SMITH:

I -- again, I think we were just two entirely different people.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. I think he was more aggressive, cocky maybe -- to use that word. And -- you know, I just had kind of a more laid back personality. I've had -- you know, not that I've talked to a lot of people since I had left -- or since I retired. But I did talk to a few people that I would run into -- you know, in the store, or even -- wherever. And people who I had taken complaints from, or people who had been supervisors, and -- you know, had problems in their units, and talked to them, and they mentioned to me that -- you know, they miss me as being the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. And that they felt that I did a good job, and that I was fair, and that I listened to them. And that I took the appropriate action for what needed to be done.

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know, that was -- that was good.

INTERVIEWER:

I think studies have been done, that have shown that women are better listeners...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...than men anyway, so -- I guess now you're at Headquarters...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and Headquarters is where -- you know, all of the Lieutenant Colonels, and the Colonel is, and that sort of thing, and at the time -- just get my notes -- you -- when you were promoted -- or not when you were promoted, when you were assigned to become the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, or Affirmative Action Officer...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...was in 1992.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And at the time, Colonel Glenn Walp...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...was the Commissioner.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Had you had any interaction with him prior to coming into this position?

MS. SMITH:

No, I hadn't.

INTERVIEWER:

No, you didn't...

MS. SMITH:

No, no.

INTERVIEWER:

What was your experience with him, once you arrived?

MS. SMITH:

It was a good experience.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I felt that he and Lt. Colonel Insel, (phonetic), at that time, who was administrative -- and was actually my supervisor.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Were both very knowledgeable, and concerned about the function of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office. And I really made, I think, the job easier. To be able to go to someone and say, "This is the problem I'm having," or not even really to have to go to them. Both of those, Colonel Walp and Colonel Insel, would come to me and find out what was going on, and try to keep abreast of -- you know, any problems, or any areas that -- you know, I might need help in, or that the Department had to take some type of step in -- you know, ensuring that there wasn't discrimination, or -- you know, there wasn't sexual harassment going on. So, it was a good relationship.

INTERVIEWER:

Good. Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And do you think that -- you know, once you arrived there, and you're developing this relationship with them -- now I know you had to take a test obviously...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...to become a Captain, but it was really shortly there after, in 1993...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...that you were promoted to Captain.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And I don't -- I can't say that I completely know how it works, but I know that they must have had a role in that promotion, know that you were doing a good job...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and that sort of thing.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, I guess my question is, how did that relationship change, or continue into being a Captain, or did it at all?

MS. SMITH:

I don't -- I don't really think it changed. Like you said -- you know, I'm sure they both had a role in my promotion. And I don't recall exactly what type of testing we were doing at the time. I mean, I know a list would come out, and the list would be divided up into several areas. A person would be shown as being highly qualified, qualified, or not presently qualified, I think.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And the terms have changed several times, so I'm not sure what was in place at that time, because I think at some point, it was like immediately qualified, or something, or not presently suitable -- so the terms have changed. But anyhow, you had to be in that top area to be promoted, and I'll say the highly qualified area.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And so, at the Commissioner's discretion, he would look at those people who were in the highly qualified area, and choose those people.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

And before he would go to -- we'll say if there were 10 people -- and I don't really remember numbers -- if we say there were 10 people in the highly qualified area, and the next area was well qualified, and there were 10 people, he would promote from the highly qualified area first, before moving into the well qualified.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, that being said, I was in the highly qualified area.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I'm sure there was discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Insel at that time, between he and the Commissioner, as to whether or

not -- you know, I should be promoted there. And I wasn't offered other positions -- you know, it was...

INTERVIEWER:

To stay in that position...

MS. SMITH:

...you know, would you -- yeah -- remain as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer as a Captain -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Well, I can't think of any reason why I would've refused that -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

So you were enjoying your position?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. I was -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- sometimes it was a headache. Sometimes the complaints were mind boggling, or you just wouldn't understand - - you know, because even though we just talked about -- saying, "This should be done -- this shouldn't be done," people still did it -- you know, so it's like -- what aren't you grasping about this concept? You know, why are you having a hard time...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...seeing that you can't do certain things? So you would still continue to have complaints. And in addition, the Bureau of Equal Employment Opportunity, through the Office of Administration under the Governor, oversaw all of the Equal Employment Opportunity Officers in State Agencies.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

So, there was some -- you know, things that they also mandated, and required, as far as reporting, and things like that. So that was a huge undertaking.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Also the United States Government required some things because of funding, and there were reports that had to be sent in for that also -- you know. That you wouldn't be available -- or wouldn't receive funding if you weren't showing your employment practices, and your hiring, and what steps you were taking to ensure that you had a diverse workforce.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, all of those things also were included under Equal Employment Opportunity, not just the looking at Complaints.

INTERVIEWER:

Right. And which is really getting to my next question -- was whatever -- in you -- the complaint department...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...but you were also doing things like writing reports for the Greater State, writing reports for -- you know, the Federal Government...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and what other types of things? Did you need to -- it looked like from the materials that you gave me, that you would do still a lot of things in the community...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...like giving speeches at...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...local organizations, and that sort of thing, so...

MS. SMITH:

Right, right. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

...can you touch on that?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah. Yeah, I did do quite a few public speaking events.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Again, I thing because I was the first black female Captain.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

I did come to know other people in State Government, so when they were having things, particularly like Black History Month, or Women's History Month, I was asked to do presentations for those types of things. Somehow I got involved in speaking at the prisons. The first time was for a graduation at Muncy, which is a female corrections institution. And I had met the Superintendent of Muncy, and she has asked me, would I be willing to come and speak at the graduation, so I had done that. And from there I assume that there were a few people there from other institutions, and then they started asking me to come...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...to -- you know, other institutions, particularly for Black History Month.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And so I went to several institutions and did speeches. I did presentations like for civil service, Black History Month, Women's History Month. I did presentation in several churches, for like their community days, and things like that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- busy.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Yeah, it was busy.

INTERVIEWER:

Really busy. Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And were you then -- you were able to do a lot of travelling then as well?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. Mainly within the State, but I did some travel outside of the State. Went to several -- not as a speaker, but I went to several conferences. I went to -- there was a women's -- oh, I can't think of the name of it right now -- but a conference of women police officers, and -- you know, I would attend things like that out of state. Also, I went to like San Francisco, and participated in their testing. They were testing for Lieutenants, I believe. And they were trying to get more minorities and females to be involved in their testing procedures, so I went out there, and did testing there. I also did testing down in Georgia...

INTERVIEWER:

Really...

MS. SMITH:

...for the Atlanta Police Department. Again, because -- you know, they were trying to get more minorities, and females involved in their testing, so I went there. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Just reviewing their test procedures?

MS. SMITH:

...there was some travel.

INTERVIEWER:

Is that what you mean...

MS. SMITH:

No, actually participating in giving the tests.

INTERVIEWER:

Oh, okay.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

All right. In addition to -- well being promoted as the first black female Captain in the Commonwealth, you were given all sorts of awards during this time period of your career. One of those was an organization called NOBLEE...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...gave you Law Enforcement Executive of the Year.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

And for some reason I don't have the year that that was here, and it may have been earlier, but I'm hoping you can tell me what NOBLEE is, and then describe this award and what that meant to you.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Noble is the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. And there are Chapters -- you know, throughout the Country. But there is also a Harrisburg Chapter -- or Central Pennsylvania Chapter. And each year, they would give awards to different police officers -- and for different reasons. And so, I believe that would've been probably 1993, or '94, that I received that award.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And there was a banquet, and -- you know, the awards were presented. So that was really a rewarding -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

To have that award given to me.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

With this award, and with -- you know, the media press surrounding not only your promotion to Captain, then your subsequent promotion to Major, what did you think about all of this history making, and this media interest in what was happening?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

What's your perception of that?

MS. SMITH:

I guess my main perception was the fact that -- I mean, it's nice that it was me...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...but it's just good that there was finally a female -- black female Major -- or a black female Captain in the State Police. Like I

said, of course it was great that it was me, but -- you know, I would have been happy if it had been someone else also -- you know, just because of the magnitude of the promotion.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, as far as the media, and stuff like that, I mean, you kind of did that just because you had to -- you know -- not big on interviews...

INTERVIEWER:

I'm kind of stunned -- and here we are.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. But, it was okay -- with your 15 minutes of fame, or whatever -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

I know -- did it feel kind of exciting, like wow -- you know? Had you ever envisioned that it would happen when you were a Trooper, coming (inaudible)...

MS. SMITH:

No, no. No, I think probably my vision when I was a Trooper was maybe to be a Sergeant.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

You know -- but I really hadn't thought to far ahead of that. And again, going back to what I said was -- you know, that I didn't think I would want to be an older female on patrol. So, that was probably my vision at the time, being a Sergeant. And of course -- you know, at that time there weren't any female -- you know, Lieutenants, Majors, Captains, so there really wasn't any role models at that time -- you know. And then of course, as I was getting promoted, there were other women in the State Police, who were getting promoted to Captain and -- you know, while I was the first female Major...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...but -- you know, there were other female Captains before me.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Right -- right.

MS. SMITH:

So.

INTERVIEWER:

Do you feel that you in any way paved the path -- do you feel that doing these firsts, really had contributed to empowering women to move up in rank? And empowering minorities to move up in rank, or even to just join the State Police...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...do you feel that that impact is real?

MS. SMITH:

I think the impact is more on women being promoted in the State Police, then it is on women actually joining.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

I think -- like I said, that it's true of women being promote because they do see that it can be done. They do see that the

State Police were, and are -- you know, promoting females and minorities. So I think there was an impact there. And just seeing -- you know, I don't think of myself as a role model, but I guess other people could, just by saying, "This is the role that I would like to have" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So...

INTERVIEWER:

Sure. And -- "If she can do it, then why can't I?"

MS. SMITH:

Right -- right.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah. Which is empowering.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

It is...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

When you were promoted to Major...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...in '94...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...in 1994, there is a photograph of you, that you're just beaming -- radiantly smiling, and your mother and your daughter are there with you.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

I'm just curious about what your family is thinking about what's happening to you -- because this is all happening very quickly...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and you're promoted -- well, you get to Equal Employment Opportunity Officer in '92, Captain in '93, Major in '94, this is really quickly that this was happening...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and what's that like for your family?

MS. SMITH:

Oh, they were -- you know, excited.

INTERVIEWER:

Sure.

MS. SMITH:

And -- I know the picture you're talking about...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...with this -- you know, silly grin. But -- you know, there are other things going on to, because my daughter, and my mother -- who I believe pinned on my Chevrons and things -- had practiced -- or my Oak Leaf, I guess at that time -- had practiced the night before. Because sometimes people get up there, and they kind of stumble through it, or they can't get the pins straight, or they don't know where to put it -- you know. And so we had practiced, and because my mother's a lot shorter than I am --

you know, I kind of had to bend down, so she could reach my shoulder and things like that -- you know, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...yeah, so everyone was excited and -- you know, really thrilled -
- you know. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Good. And I guess, in the same question that I had for you when you went from Lieutenant to Captain, Captain to Major, was there a difference -- Captain to Major?

MS. SMITH:

No, I don't -- I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Not as far as the -- as the position itself went...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...you know. There was a difference of course in subordinates -- even though I wasn't supervising any Captains, or anything like that, there was a difference in people's reactions, I guess, to you

-- you know. Because you now were of a higher rank than -- than maybe they were -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So there was a difference in that. Yeah...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. And at the time -- you know, you're at Headquarters, and just a year later Colonel Walp exist...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...new Colonel Evanko comes in.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So I'd like to get your perspective on the change of the guard, and what that was like -- the difference in Walp and Evanko -- or even your relationship. It sounds like you had a fairly close relationship with Colonel Walp...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum -- uh-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...and Lieutenant Colonel Insel, and what was the difference in that with Evanko -- Colonel Evanko?

MS. SMITH:

There was definitely a different style of management.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

I -- like I said, appreciated both Colonel Walp, and Colonel Insel, for seeking me out, asking questions, things like that. Now some people complained about that, as far as thinking they were being micro-managed -- you know, and didn't like it -- you know, whereas I thought that it was showing an interest. So when Colonel Evanko came, and Lieutenant Colonel Corey (phonetic), became then my supervisor, there was definitely a change in management. It wasn't -- I don't believe -- as much hands on as it had been, and it was more me going to them, and saying -- you know, "This is what's going on," or "I think you should know about such and such," or just leaving them a memo -- you know, or sending them a memo stating that -- you know, this is what was happening.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Now of course, if there was any big incident -- you know, going, I would discuss it with them and -- you know, tell them about it. Particularly when you're looking at liability, and -- you know, somebody's going to end of suing you for whatever -- you know, you had to keep them apprised of that. Also, with the Office of Chief Counsel, and letting them know -- you know, this is what's going on. Still, I wasn't investigating the incidents, but -- you know, letting them know about it, and -- you know, knowing that I had contacted Internal Affairs, and -- you know, there was going to be an investigation done -- you know. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But I think that was the main difference -- you know, like I said, just not the same hands on type of management that had occurred before.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. Were there any changes -- general changes within the Department that affected you in your position in any way with Colonel Evanko coming in?

MS. SMITH:

No...

INTERVIEWER:

No.

MS. SMITH:

...not that I can think of, no.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

It was sometime during the time that Colonel Evanko was there, that the office changed from Affirmative Action, to Bureau of Equal Employment Opportunity -- or Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

So that change was made during their tenure as Commissioner. And so there was some new regulations that came out, and just things that were made -- within all State Agencies, not just with the State Police.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And sometimes that was a problem, because the State Police was, and is run differently than other State Agencies.

INTERVIEWER:

Sure.

MS. SMITH:

And so, sometimes we would have problems -- for instance, they thought -- the Bureau of Equal Employment Opportunity, under the Office of Administration, believed that they should have access to certain reports. And we're saying -- the State Police are saying, "No" -- you know, "These are confidential," and "That you don't have access" -- you know. So sometimes there was a little fighting, and misunderstandings going on in those areas...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

But overall, I think they worked out -- you know, just by saying, "You can't have this" -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Why do you think that change -- not only a change in name, but the change in different regulations occurred? What was going on then?

MS. SMITH:

I think one of the reasons is because Affirmative Action had kind of a not good connotation for people -- you know, they -- a lot of people looked as Affirmative Action just as unqualified minorities being hired. Where as Equal Employment Opportunity, maybe had a better ring to it, I guess.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

For lack of a better way to describe it. And the regulations -- there weren't a lot of changes, but -- you know, the regulations I think were broadened. For instance, the sexual orientation being put in.

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

And things like that -- you know, so -- it's Equal Employment Opportunity for everyone -- you know, and so it's not going to be just based on race, or -- you know. And to, it's the opportunity to

compete, rather than saying -- you know, "We're going to hire these people because they are black," or, "Because they are catholic," or whatever the -- you know, class may be -- you know. So, I think that's the reason why it was changed.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum. You were promoted to Major in 1994, and stayed a Major, and decided to retire in 2000.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

So, within those six years of being a Major, and ultimately being the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for eight years...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...if you can kind of tell me why you decided to leave when you did, and give me just your overall view of the position just as a whole.

MS. SMITH:

Okay. An overall view, I guess, of the position was that -- I mean it was always rewarding to have a person make a complaint, and be able to resolve what the issue was -- you know. And again,

not always with discipline, but just being able to point out to the person, how things could be resolved, whether it did end up going through discipline, or whether a person -- just like I said earlier -- wanted someone to be counseled about something. So there was always a reward at the end, as far as the complainant being satisfied with what was being done.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean they may not have always been satisfied with the outcome, because sometimes a person -- even though they made an allegation, there was no way of proving that it had actually happened. So people weren't always satisfied with the outcome. But I found -- at least I believe, that they were always satisfied with the work that I did -- you know. That what I tried to do, and kept them apprised of what was being done along the way, and kept them kind of in the loop, as to what was being done. I don't think the position changed a lot. I think people did become more aware of the regulations, and -- you know, just society in general -- you know, it wasn't just that this was happening in the State Police.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I mean, it was happening all over -- you know. So, we had regulations even that covered third parties coming in to a station, and maybe sexually harassing the delivery man coming in, and sexually harassing -- you know. So things were changing all over, relative to sexual harassment. So that's the main change I think that I'd seen, during those eight years. And as far as retiring, it was just time. I -- being the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer was rewarding on a day to day basis, I think, when you saw an outcome, or saw a problem solved. But it was also depressing, I guess -- for lack of a better word. Because it was about receiving complaints. And like I said earlier, no one called to say they were being treated fairly -- you know, it was always about -- you know, what was wrong, rather than what was right.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I'm sure the same -- you know, would be like said for the Disciplinary Officer -- you know, and Internal Affairs -- you know...

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

...they're investigating wrong doing, rather than -- you know, looking at the things that are going right.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So, about that time -- you know, I started thinking that I had my 25 years in at that point. And thought that I would like a change, so that was the reason for the retirement.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

What was the reaction of the people that you worked with...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...when you announced -- or decided that you'd be retiring?

MS. SMITH:

Well, of course they were concerned about who was going to replace me -- you know.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And I believe started -- you know, asking around, and -- you know. And I was telling people that I was retiring, and -- you know, who might be interested in it, so...

INTERVIEWER:

You know, in the same way that Major Brooks was able to poke around, and -- you know, kind of groom you, so to speak...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...for this position, were you able to do the same thing for your successor?

MS. SMITH:

Well, I didn't choose...

INTERVIEWER:

Did you look for someone...

MS. SMITH:

...I didn't choose the person. No...

INTERVIEWER:

Really.

MS. SMITH:

It was a Sergeant Robinson (phonetic), and she expressed an interest, and I believed talked to Colonel Corey about the fact that she was interested in assuming the position, and that's how that came about. But -- you know, prior to my leaving, we did start going over things, and -- you know, the procedures, and -- you know, introducing her to different people, and going down to the Bureau of Equal Employment in Harrisburg, and -- you know, getting her aware of -- you know, everything that was going.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

And up to speed with the reports, and what was due, and -- you know, what would be immediately due, as I was leaving, or -- you know, what she had time to take care of -- things like that, so...

INTERVIEWER:

Right -- right.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

And as far as your family...

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum.

INTERVIEWER:

...their reaction to you deciding to retire?

MS. SMITH:

I think overall they were glad.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

You know -- yeah. I'm in one place -- you know -- I never made it back to Pittsburgh. Still in the Harrisburg area. But, my children are -- you know, close by so that's nice. So...

INTERVIEWER:

And did they throw you a party -- did you have a party?

MS. SMITH:

Yeah -- yeah. There was a retirement party. Yeah -- so that was nice.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

Well attended.

INTERVIEWER:

Yes...

MS. SMITH:

So that was good. Didn't have to have it in the phone booth -- but, yeah, it was good.

INTERVIEWER:

Can you just really briefly describe the types of things that you've been doing post-retirement, and how being a Trooper -- being a Pennsylvania State Trooper for 25 years contributed to your interest in post-retirement?

MS. SMITH:

Okay. Mainly, as far as employment, I've been working for the Civil Service -- this is occasionally. And I've been helping them with testing in different positions. And I guess -- you know, having been with the State Police, and involved in testing at some points, and recruiting...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

...and interviewing, that's contributed to help me -- you know, take part in the Civil Service testing. The other thing I've been

doing is with the Center for Independent Living, as an Independent Monitor, and I go out and I interview, and talk to people who have disabilities. This is through mental health -- mental retardation. And I talked to people, or their caregivers, about their quality of life issues, and -- you know, what they may need, what things can be improved to help them, how can their life be improved, talk about their living situations, healthcare, and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

So those are the two main things that I'm involved in. I do a lot of babysitting for my grandchildren.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I do that, and so -- that's mainly it. I did work for a short time -- oh, about a year and a half after I retired, I got a job as a Reservationist at the Hilton.

INTERVIEWER:

Okay.

MS. SMITH:

And I did that for a while -- and I did that part-time. And I worked about a year and a half, and then I left there, and did nothing again for a while.

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

I had a chance to do some travelling -- going to Cancun, which I decided I love, and Arizona -- and I have a granddaughter that lives in Arizona, so I get to go out and visit her. So...

INTERVIEWER:

Um-hum.

MS. SMITH:

That's mainly what I've been doing.

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah.

MS. SMITH:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:

Is there anything at all, that you'd like to say about being a Major, or even just your time on the State Police?

MS. SMITH:

Um-hum. Kind of like a summary?

INTERVIEWER:

Yeah, well just any last words, I guess -- I mean...

MS. SMITH:

Well -- you know, I can only -- I guess, state what I've stated before, that...

INTERVIEWER:

Right.

MS. SMITH:

...I joined the State Police basically, because I wanted another job, and because I was recruited. And it ended up being so much more than a job -- you know, that it actually became a career. It became something that I thoroughly enjoyed. As I said, I think a lot of Troopers become Troopers because they want to help people. So, I got the opportunity to do that. Also, just to have a variety of jobs, to get to try different things, the different challenges. To be able to move around, and meet new people. And most people that I talk to who have retired say -- you know, that's what they miss -- you know, the people...

