Interview with John L. Harrison, Jr., Esquire, by Clark Groome, for the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania Oral History Project, North Wales, Pennsylvania, November 14, 2013.

CLARK GROOME: All right. You grew up as an Episcopalian?

JOHN HARRISON: Yes.

CG: And where did you start your life as an Episcopalian?

JH: I lived in Bryn Mawr when I was born, and my family went to the Church of the Redeemer, and I was baptized there, probably in 1936, by the then rector, Canon Earp.

CG: E-A-R-P?

JH: E-A-R-P.

CG: Okay. And then, as a kid, were you active in the church?

JH: Not really. I would say that my family were people that went to church when there was a family funeral, or a wedding. And I didn't really become very active, although by the time I was ten or twelve years old my mother thought that my brother and I should go to Sunday school wherever we lived. And typically we would be taken and left and picked up later.

CG: Right. And you were confirmed, I assume?

JH: I was confirmed in, I think, 1949, at the Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr. Excuse me—at the Church of the Messiah in Gwynedd. Roughly, then—I could get the exact dates, if that's important.

CG: I think maybe you have. I think you may have given them to me. It's not important.

JH: But at that particular point in my growing up, we were living in Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania, and we went to church, by then, fairly regularly, at the Church of the Messiah in Gwynedd, where my

parents had been married in 1934. And the rector then was William Patterson, who had been the rector there since the 1920s. The bishop who confirmed me was Bishop William Remington, who was the retired missionary bishop of Eastern Oregon, who I learned subsequently was a beloved person, because I got to know other people from Eastern Oregon many years later. But also, I think Bishop Remington, who was a Philadelphia native, and I think had gone to Penn, was an Olympic track star in the early 1920s, when he was—so looking back on it, I feel very fortunate that it was Bishop Remington who laid his hands on my head, because he was a very wonderful person, from what I've known.

CG: Yeah. When did you really become involved with the church? How did that happen?

JH: I began to be interested in the church was I was at Yale as an undergraduate.

CG: What did you major in at Yale?

JH: I majored in history at Yale. But I went sometimes to the Yale Chapel, but I also went to—I explored some of the Episcopal Churches in the vicinity of the college campus there, and I began to be interested. And then I went—after I graduated from Yale, I went in the Navy, and I was interested enough so that I was willing to be, on my destroyer, the Protestant lay leader.

CG: Okay.

JH: So every once in a while we held religious services when we were deployed over in the Mediterranean or someplace. But the time that I really got involved with the church was when we moved—when Alice, my wife, who I'd married in 1959, and I moved back to

Philadelphia, after I got out of the Navy. And I went to Penn Law School, but we lived in Wynnewood then, and we began to go fairly regularly to the Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr. At that point, Frank Griswold was a brand new curate.

CG: Curate, right.

JH: Fresh out of his training for the ministry. We got to know Frank a little at that time. But then we moved. After I graduated from law school in 1960 we moved to a little house in Roxborough, near Chestnut Hill, and we began to attend St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill.

CG: Which was Alice's family's church?

JH: That was Alice's family's church, and Alice's family had been faithful churchgoers, and workers for church things, throughout her growing up. And that's when the real change from weddings and funerals only took place for me. I became a Sunday school teacher, and relatively early on I was recruited by Alice's father—because this was the time when Bishop DeWitt was the bishop—to be what was called at the time a "prime consultant" for the diocese.

CG: Explain what that is. And Alice's father was Alexander Wieland.

JH: That's right. And he was a prime consultant, and he said, "This is a good thing for you to do if you want to be involved with the church on a level beyond the parish."

CG: What did a prime consultant do?

JH: A prime consultant—well, I need to give you a little background. Bishop DeWitt was a visionary bishop, and he was very involved with the civil rights movement.

CG: Right, and somewhat controversial in the diocese.

JH: Somewhat controversial in the diocese, because we had the Girard College case going on, the desegregation of Girard College.

CG: Right.

JH: And he was also involved in anti-Vietnam War movement. And as a result of that, and it's my understanding, at least, that there were people who said they wouldn't have their—they didn't want their churches to give to the work of the diocese.

CG: While he was the boss?

JH: Well, as long as the diocese was taking what were viewed as these positions on civil rights and the war.

CG: Positions that I assume you were in sympathy with?

JH: I was in sympathy with those.

CG: Okay. Didn't mean to interrupt. Go ahead.

JH: So somebody must have come up with the idea that we need to visit each congregation and explain what we're doing, in terms of the overall mission of the diocese, and to explain that it wasn't just to make statements of opposition to the Vietnam War, but it was also to do all kinds of ministries that were helping the poor in the inner city, to help with the overseas missionary work through the national church—to explain the broad program of where the money went when a parish gave to the diocese.

CG: To the diocese, yeah.

JH: And the prime consultants received training over a weekend. I remember the training was at one of the big motels out at Valley Forge. And then we were sent out two by two, to two or three congregations, to explain things. And my teammate was somebody named Brown, and for some reason I'm blanking on his first name at

this point. His father was a rector, a retired rector in the diocese. But he and I went—I can remember two, and I think we probably went to three, but I can only remember two of the churches. We went to All Hallow's, Wyncote, and we went to—to St. Luke's, Germantown.

CG: Okay.

JH: And we went to one other, but I remember that in St. Luke's, Germantown, and in the one other that I can't remember without going back and digging through my records, we were warmly received by congregations that were obviously in support of—of the work of the diocese, including the work that Bishop DeWitt was doing. I remember that [at] All Hallow's, Wyncote, we were really pilloried, particularly by the then-rector, whose name I won't mention now, because although I know what it is—although maybe I should. The rector in particular was troubled. Lou Fifer was his name, F-I-F-E-R.

CG: Okay.

JH: Was troubled by the position of the church on the Vietnam War.

CG: Well, he wasn't alone.

JH: Okay.

CG: There were lots of people who were. I mean, DeWitt had a hard time.

JH: But I think it's worth telling the story, because he, more than his congregation, sort of attacked Mr. Brown and me for carrying the message. We were the messengers that were sort of attacked because he wasn't convinced that the diocese was doing the right thing. His congregation didn't say much. He really spoke for them. I wasn't sure whether they agreed with him or not. But I mention this only because Lou Fifer, sometime not too long after that, had serious health

problems, and from what I heard, Bishop DeWitt was a wonderful pastor to him in this time of his own personal need. And Mr. Fifer really changed his views about Bishop DeWitt, and it ended up with what I would call in a much better place than it had been when we prime consultants set out for that task.

CG: Yeah. My understanding about Bishop DeWitt, from the things that I'm hearing as we're talking to people about this, and reading about the diocese, is that he was personally very popular. It was his positions that were not—people liked him, but they disagreed with him. Is that a fair—was that your experience?

JH: Well, I think that's a fair characterization. They disagreed with him.

CG: I mean, vehemently disagreed, right?

JH: Yes, vehemently disagreed on the political issues, if you want to call it that. But I think that I heard in more ways than one, but I've given the example of Mr. Fifer, that he was very pastoral with his clergy, from all I can tell.

CG: Okay, what is your memory of that period of time, during the DeWitt era, at your own parish?

JH: I think that—

CG: At St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill?

JH: At St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill, by and large we supported Bishop DeWitt, but there were a number of people in the parish who weren't in agreement on either the civil rights thing or the Vietnam War thing.

CG: Was it the policy, or was it the way it was played out? Because there was this whole "let them have the typewriters if they want them" issue, give away whatever you need to give away. Was it not so

much—was it the policies that offended people, or sort of the—the way in which the policies were implemented?

JH: To answer that, I would say the people who were against the policies said, "The church shouldn't be in this business of social issues and moral issues like that." The church should take care of the souls of the people that come to church for renewal, and so forth, but shouldn't be challenging us with issues that are of the type that we were dealing with at that time.

CG: So, as Bishop DeWitt's time went on, you still were involved in the diocese. And he ultimately stepped down, but you didn't. I mean, you were there. And the next person in line was Lyman Ogilby.

JH: Right.

CG: Tell me about—let me rephrase the question. Was Bishop Ogilby something of a healing presence, after the tumult of the DeWitt era? And what role did you play at that point?

JH: Well first, to answer your question: was he a healing presence? The answer is "yes," although he shared the same views as Bishop DeWitt. But some time had gone by, and generally speaking, people in the diocese were coming around to those same views. But during the latter years of Bishop DeWitt's time, I began to be more involved at the diocesan level. Bishop DeWitt, or somebody who worked for him, got me to be the diocesan budget chairman, working on the annual budgets that had to be—

CG: Which must have been fun, when nobody would give you money!

JH: That's right.

CG: [Laughs] Challenging!

JH: But it was challenging. And although we had a committee and so forth, the budget work that I did in those one or two years was largely sitting down with a piece of paper with Jack Hardwick, who was then on the bishop's staff, and we figured out a budget, and sort of tried to test it out as best we could, and then eventually took it to the Finance and Property Committee, which, and so forth. But I got started with that.

The other thing, and it may have been because of the fact that I was then working in the law office of William White, who was the chancellor of the diocese, and had been for a number of years, I was elected to be on the board of the Church Foundation, which was basically the trustees of the trust funds of the diocese, and of a great many of its parishes, and managed I don't know how many millions of dollars of endowments, and that sort of thing. So I went to meetings, that Bishop DeWitt chaired, of the Church Foundation, and also I worked under him and his staff with the budget matters. So that brings us into the Ogilby years. And I can remember the election of Bishop Ogilby, because I was a delegate from St. Paul's, Chestnut Hill.

CG: Right.

JH: On that occasion. That convention, special electing convention, I guess it was, was held at Irvine Auditorium, at the University of Pennsylvania—sort of a big amphitheatre.

CG: Right.

JH: And Bishop Ogilby was, I think, the leading candidate, but several of the rectors, the prominent rectors in the diocese, I think, were also candidates. One was my own rector, Tom Edwards.

CG: Right.

JH: And I can't remember whether Jim MacColl, of—

CG: St. Thomas's, Whitemarsh, yeah.

JH: But there were several, and it took a few votes before Lyman was elected. But he was elected.

CG: But he was a bishop—but he was here as an assisting bishop.

JH: He was here, yeah. He had—

CG: He was not a suffragan, and he was not a coadjutor.

JH: He was just basically a staff member, in the sense that he was an assisting bishop.

CG: Right, and then he got elected as coadjutor.

JH: And then he got elected as coadjutor to succeed Bishop DeWitt. And he had been a missionary bishop, first in the Philippines, and then in South Dakota, before he—

CG: One piece of information you may or may not know, but I do, because his brother was the chaplain of the school I went to, Alexander Ogilby. When Lyman Ogilby was elected bishop, missionary bishop in the Philippines, he was the youngest bishop in the history of the Episcopal Church.

JH: I think that is probably true, yeah.

CG: Which is interesting. He wasn't when he was here, because that was several years later.

JH: Lyman was elected—because they did it this way in those days—a missionary bishop by the House of Bishops. It was not—the people of the Philippines, at that point, didn't elect their own bishops. But one of the things I think that he saw and helped to have happen when he was missionary bishop to the Philippines is that they would have

their own indigenous people, and elect their own people. And he pretty much did the same thing in South Dakota. He was only in South Dakota for a short time.

CG: It was after South Dakota that Bishop DeWitt brought him to Philadelphia.

JH: As an assistant, yes.

CG: The period of time that you're talking about now was also a very active period of time in terms of some major issues in the history of the Episcopal Church. Race was obviously a huge issue during the DeWitt period. But then we were beginning to create new prayer books. Women were being considered as possible—the possibility of being ordained to the priesthood. And the whole issue of the gay person's role in the church, both in the official church, and as lay people. All of that was coming up. It must have been a fascinating time.

How did the Diocese of Pennsylvania—and we'll talk about the National Church in a minute, because I know you had a huge role there. How did the Diocese of Pennsylvania deal with all of these issues? And what was the impact of that special service in 1974, when—it happened in Philadelphia, when they ordained women before it was officially legal? Even though it wasn't illegal, according to canon.

JH: Well.

CG: It must have been a fascinating time for you.

JH: I would have to say with hindsight that I am thankful that I lived through so much progress. But I must admit that at the time I wasn't really aware that it was happening, that I was at these. And I don't

think I realized the significance of the Vietnam War until afterwards. So I lived through the time but I'm not sure that I was aware that I was.

CG: You were just living?

JH: I was just living, yeah.

CG: Yeah.

JH: So I didn't—

CG: What was your reaction? Let's take the ordination of women. What was your reaction? Bishop Ogilby was in office, and he didn't forbid it, but he sort of ignored it. And it happened in the diocese. And what was your reaction about the ordination of women, and the way it happened back in 1974?

JH: Well, first of all, I guess, I mean, to be completely honest, I was on the fence about the ordination of women. At the time, I thought, well, there's never been any women ministers in the whole history of the church, practically. It must be—so I was not actually present for that event up at the Church of the Advocate. With hindsight, I wish I had been! And I wish my thinking had been a little farther advanced. But my guess is that—

CG: You weren't vehemently opposed, or were you?

JH: I wasn't vehemently opposed.

CG: You were on the fence?

JH: I was on the fence. I wasn't sure whether this was right.

CG: What convinced you that it was, ultimately?

JH: I think within a few months, or even less than that, I said, "Why didn't we figure this out sooner? Why did it take 2000 years?" But at the exact moment, I remember reading about it and I said, "Well, that's

okay, but I'm still not sure that they should have done this." So I wasn't there, but I very soon realized that, I mean, why did it take 2000 years? And, this does seem right to me. So, my guess is that I was way behind Bishop DeWitt and his thinking, and the eleven women, and so forth, some of whom I got to know quite well over the years. And I was behind Barbara Harris, who was there. I was probably behind where Bishop Ogilby was, because I think he was supportive of it, but didn't really—

CG: Well, he couldn't.

JH: He really couldn't. But, so I was soon a convert, and a strong supporter. And I was honored 25 years later, when they got me to be one of the participants in the 25th anniversary of that event service, also held at the—

CG: Advocate?

JH: —Advocate. And in the meanwhile, I'd been completely supportive of women's ordination. So that's sort of where—.

CG: So you're doing all these things at St. Paul's. You're doing all this stuff in the diocese. And then somehow, you become more involved with the national church. How did that happen? Was it that you ran to be a deputy at a General Convention, and then from there it grew? How did that all work out?

JH: If I remember correctly, right after Bishop Ogilby became bishop, I got promoted from chair of the Budget Committee to chair of the Finance and Property Committee. And I served in that role for I don't know how—fifteen years? A number of years; it was longer than that, possibly. As a result of that, I visited probably a third or more, maybe even half of the parishes in the diocese, to talk about diocesan

finances, and diocesan budgets, as we got the budget process going each year for the—for the annual Diocesan Convention. So I guess I became a somewhat known person in the diocese, and somebody must have asked me, "Would you be willing to be a candidate to run as a lay deputy to the General Convention?" I'm sure I didn't think of the idea myself.

CG: Yeah.

JH: And I said, "Oh, sure."

CG: You went to five of them—you went to four of them. You were elected to five of them.

JH: I went to four. So the first one I went to was the 1982 General Convention in New Orleans, which was six years after the ordination of women had been—

CG: Approved, yeah.

JH: —approved. And it was six years after the *1979 Prayer Book* received its—

CG: First reading.

JH: —first reading, and it was eventually finalized in '79. So those two things were history by the time I went to a General Convention. So there were some women deputies; there were no women bishops at that point. And the New Orleans General Convention—I'd have to go look to remember them all, but our clergy deputation included, I think, Jim Trimble, and Frank Griswold, Jim Moodey, and I forget; I'd have to figure out who the other clergy representative was.

CG: That's a pretty good group. [Laughs]

JH: And then we had—I have a record of it back at the house, if you need to look.

CG: It would be interesting to have it.

JH: Yeah. And the lay people, one of whom was Jan Duncan, who was a long-time member of the staff of Bishop Ogilby.

CG: What were the issues that were beginning?

JH: The biggest issue that we had at that convention was the approval of the *1982 Hymnal*.

CG: Oh!

JH: And that was—that was really fun, because we sang lots of hymns at our noonday prayers! [Laughs] The noonday prayers were led by a faculty member at Virginia Seminary, I remember—Charles Price, who was a well-known Episcopalian. But the high point about the approval of the 1982 Hymnal that came from me, is when Bland Tucker—this is Francis Bland Tucker—who is a very elderly priest from the Diocese of Virginia, and his older brother had been the presiding bishop, Henry St. George Tucker, back in the 1940s. When Bland Tucker came up to the podium in the House of Deputies, and said—and I should point out that he was the only surviving member of the 1940 Hymnal Commission.

CG: Oh!

JH: And there had been quite a bit of controversy about whether some hymns should be included or not.

CG: Of course. There always is.

JH: There were people that were saying "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" ought to be in here, and others that said no.

CG: No way!

JH: [Laughs] And that sort of thing. But when Bland Tucker went up to the podium—and incidentally, I should mention he's the author of a number of our favorite hymns.

CG: Okay.

JH: So, but he said, he said, "I thought when we did our work in 1940, that no one could do a better job with a hymnal. But he said, "I think this is a much better job, and I urge you to approve it." So we got a blessing from the 1940s.

CG: Well, what did you need? I guess the next big issue to come before the church was the whole issue of homosexuality. And I think it was in 1976 that it first came up, and there was something about everybody's a member of the church, but blah, blah, blah. All the words, but they were empty words because they didn't really address the issues of same-sex civil unions, or marriage, or—or ordination. But that began to become more important. And you got very much involved in that when you were chancellor of the Diocese. Tell me what happened, and how that all played out, because it ultimately cost you your job, and it was your own choice to make it do that. But, tell me how that all happened.

JH: Well, let me just go back to see. As I say, my first General Convention was 1982. The next one was 1985, in Anaheim, California.

CG: Right.

JH: And it was at that General Convention that the new presiding bishop was elected, Edmond Browning.

CG: Right.

JH: Up until that point, it had been John Allin, spelled A-L-L-I-N, who had been from Mississippi, I think, and who had been what I would call a conservative reaction or pause from the progress that had been on civil rights, and things like that, under Bishop John Hines, who had been the preceding presiding bishop. It was under Bishop Hines that—that the civil rights movement moved so far forward. And I think the church took a pause and elected John Allin as the next presiding bishop, and he—he had not—he was clearly against the ordination of women. But it was approved over his views.

CG: He didn't fight it as strongly as he might have, did he?

JH: No, no.

CG: I mean, because he knew that's where the church was going?

JH: Yeah, I guess. So in the '76—but he had been the presiding bishop when that issue came up, so. But then we had Edmond Browning being elected the new presiding bishop at Anaheim, and he, in his inaugural address, used the words that "our church needs to be a church with no outcasts." And those words, I think, symbolize his entire period as presiding bishop. So in 1985, those words had an impact on me. We all knew that we were—that he was really talking, and that we were really talking about gay and lesbian people, and their lack of full acceptance in the church.

CG: Right. Well, he was the bishop of Hawaii, which is a very inclusive state, because of the various cultural things.

JH: Right.

CG: I assume that that played something—played part of it, for him.

JH: But if I got started on the work for greater inclusion of gay and lesbian people, it was those prophetic words of Bishop DeWitt that sort of got me started.

CG: Right. Bishop DeWitt, or Bishop Browning?

JH: I mean, Bishop Browning. I had sort of been moving in that direction. I think by the early eighties, the AIDS crisis was upon us.

CG: Yes.

JH: And I had begun to be involved—I think I was on some diocesan committee to deal with AIDS, or something, by the time of that convention. And I can't remember the exact timing, but I was on one committee or another, dealing with AIDS, sitting in a board room, talking about AIDS, or something, and how we should respond to the needs. And I happened to talk to somebody named Jean Day, and there have been several Jean Days that had prominent roles in the diocese—I mean a younger Jean Day, who was the mother of some little children. And she told me that she was working as a buddy for people with AIDS.

CG: Right.

JH: And I said, "What does that mean?" She said, "Well, I'm the buddy of somebody who has AIDS. I go down on Friday afternoon, pick him up in West Philadelphia, or wherever he lives, and take him home and have him spend the weekend with my family. And if he needs to go to the doctor, I drive him to the doctor. Or if he has something, like I'm on call, and that sort of thing."

CG: This is in the time when AIDS was primarily considered to be "the gay plague."

JH: Yes, yes.

CG: Yeah.

JH: And so, when I listened to Jean Day—and just to clarify which Day she is, her husband is Charlie Day, who you may or may not know. And I guess her name is not important in this. Probably I shouldn't have mentioned it.

CG: Well, it's there.

JH: But I all of a sudden felt shame, because here I am; I'm on this high-falutin' committee that's dealing with global issues of AIDS, and here is somebody who is really helping somebody with AIDS. And so I said, "I think I need to be doing that." And so I began a period of several years in which I actively worked as a buddy for a person with AIDS, under an umbrella in Philadelphia. It was called Action AIDS. And I had three—three people, all of whom died. One was a teenaged African American young man who lived with his grandmother in North Philadelphia, and he had to live with his grandmother because his own parents rejected him because he was gay.

CG: Okay.

JH: He died, and I remember that. Another was the rector of an Episcopal Church who lived in West Philadelphia, and I went—I don't know how many times I went to see him in the hospital, or took him to the doctor, cleaned things at his house—all the things you did as a buddy. He died. And the last one was a vice president of a prominent national bank.

CG: Wow!

JH: A senior vice president from a very cultured background; lived out in sort of the East Falls area. And again, it was the same story, but he also died. And they actually even asked me to speak at his funeral,

which I did. But those experiences made a powerful imprint on me, and I became involved with a group of people, really chaired, I would say, primarily by the Reverend Rodger Broadley.

CG: Right.

JH: Who worked for—we called it the Committee for Inclusion, and we worked for—for fuller acceptance of gay people, and lesbians, in the church.

CG: Okay.

JH: And some of that work was going on between the 1985 General Convention and the 1988 General Convention, which was in Detroit. And so as I say, Bishop Browning was my inspiration, but I had hands-on work that made me sensitive of this terrible way we had treated a whole group of human beings.

CG: Okay, so when did you become the chancellor of the Diocese?

JH: I was the chancellor for, I would say it was—whether it was a year and a half or a year, I became the chancellor toward the end of the Lyman Ogilby administration. And I think that he stepped down in 1986, if I'm not mistaken, and Allen Bartlett took over soon thereafter. And I had been the chair of the search committee that recommended Allen Bartlett as one of the candidates who the electing convention considered. But in any event, but I was there for, I think, the last few months of Ogilby, and the first portion of Allen Bartlett's.

CG: And so what happened?

JH: Well, I had been—and I hope my memory's got the timing right. But I think I had been—sometime between '85 and '88 I became involved as an active person in this Committee for Inclusion, which was sort of an informal group, chaired by Rodger Broadley. And in our

discussions—and then at some point between ’85 and ’88 I became the chancellor. And as we approached the 1988 General Convention in Detroit, our little Committee for Inclusion thought, wouldn’t it be great if we submitted—which a deputy is able to do—a resolution to support greater inclusion? And so we crafted up—our little group crafted up a resolution, and I sent it in.

CG: Because you were the deputy?

JH: Because I was one of the deputies, that urged the church to fully include gay people in the church, including the ordained ministry, and so forth.

CG: And then all hell broke loose in a lot of places in the diocese, I gather?

JH: Well, I think that if I have the timing correctly—and I need to be very clear on the record that as I look back on that particular time in my life, I feel a real sense of shame that I—that at some point while I was wearing the hat of chancellor, the so-called neutral legal advisor to the bishop, that I was also actively working on a controversial—what was then a controversial issue in the church. And I think with hindsight—and I’ve told him this on more occasions than one—I think I put Bishop Bartlett in a terrible position by being one of his sort of semi-staff members, taking a position on an issue that—that he wasn’t really comfortable with at that point.

CG: But he said that he never asked you to resign. That was your decision.

JH: That was my decision. I remember how it came about. But just so you know, that I think that I was completely in error. It would be like the White House press secretary saying something that was different from what the president thought. I mean, it was none of my business to be involved in a controversial issue. I should have—I think I

should not have put my name on a resolution that went before the General Convention. By then, of course, by the time that '88 General Convention happened, I had been chancellor, and had resigned. But I mean, it's an embarrassing moment in my life. If I had it to live over again, I should have pursued my real concern about that issue in a way that was not so embarrassing to the bishop.

CG: Get somebody else to put their name on it, for instance?

JH: Well, but I should have—I just feel very badly that I put Bishop Bartlett in such an awkward place, because here I was, as I say, one of his quasi-staff, who was doing something that made him feel very uncomfortable.

CG: Okay. But it didn't damage your reputation in the National Church, and I don't think it damaged your reputation in the diocese, either, because I think it ultimately, regardless of how people felt, they felt that the resolution of your no longer being the chancellor was probably the appropriate one. But then you've had quite a career in the national church as well as in the diocese. You were on the Executive Council?

JH: Well, I can explain about that. Well first of all, on my resignation, I have a file sitting in a box that moved with us to New Hampshire twelve years ago, that consists of a whole lot of letters that came from all over the country, that said that what I had done in standing—trying to stand up for fair inclusion of gay and lesbian people was the right thing. And I got letters from people like Bishop DeWitt, and from Bishop Irvine Swift, who had been one of our assistant bishops under Bishop DeWitt. I'd have to go back and see, but I got—it wasn't just from bishops; I got a number of them from bishops, but they were

from people in the diocese and outside of the diocese. It's a fairly big file full. There's also some letters in there that told me I was a sinner, and that they were praying for me. [Laughs]

CG: Well, it's always good to be prayed for, I guess!

JH: But when this happened, and I don't know whether this is of any—any note, when I was wearing the hat of chancellor, and also being actively involved with the cause of full inclusion, I remember getting a phone call in my office from Bishop Frank Turner, who was a dear friend, and who was then the assistant bishop to Bishop Bartlett.

CG: He just had been elected suffragan.

JH: I guess he was suffragan, yeah. And he asked me if I had a minute, and I said, "Sure. I'll come right over." And he said, "I don't know whether you realize what an awkward thing you're sort of presenting for Bishop Bartlett." I said, "I do realize it." And I said, "I need to really think about it." And I said, "Maybe the thing that I should really do is to resign." And I was asked, and I can't remember whether it was by either Bishop Turner or Bishop Bartlett, himself. But whoever it was said they'd like me to stay as chancellor, but I really would need to—I'm trying to remember the word that was used. It wasn't—maybe it was "retract" the position I had taken. And I said, "Let me think about that." But I very quickly knew that in all conscience I couldn't retract my support of gays and lesbians, and I said, "I think I just have to resign, and I really feel badly about the position I've put you in," and so forth. And I remember when I had that conversation with Bishop Bartlett that we ended the session with one of those real hugs that has a lot of emotion in it.

CG: I'm sure.

JH: And I confirmed my resignation in a letter that I sent. And remember, we lived way out in Roxborough, but I hand-wrote the letter, and got on my bicycle and rode all the way down to Bishop Bartlett's house on Saturday, I think it was.

CG: On South 10th Street. That's a long drive.

JH: And handed in the letter at the door. I can't remember if Jerrie Bartlett received it, or what, but Allen wasn't there at that point. And I got back on my bike and rode home again. And I think in that big folder of stuff about—about that issue, that I probably have a copy of that letter. You're making me think that those letters are something which probably, along with the thing that Clark and I talked about before this session, I should give him my copy of Bishop Twelve's *History of the Diocese*, so it can eventually go to the archives. But maybe I should deposit those letters.

CG: All of that stuff would be useful in the archives. Sure. Absolutely.

JH: It might be useful, because—but the bottom line is that I felt very badly about—about the awkward position I put Bishop Bartlett in.

CG: Well, let's move away from that, because you've made that very clear, and let's talk about something that might have been more—more enjoyable, and that's your time working in the National Church, on the Executive Committee. And how'd that happen?

JH: Well, let me just fill you in with a little bit more. So, the General Convention in Detroit took place, and the issue of the church and gay and lesbian rights was front page stuff on the *Detroit Free Press*, and in *Church News*. And the church was really making progress, by 1988 on these issues. And so I continued to work on that. In about 19—well, in whatever, probably whatever year we elected deputies, or

members, to the Executive Council, Allen Bartlett contacted me, and it was probably 1990, I would guess. Allen Bartlett said that he would like to recommend my name as a candidate for membership on the Executive Council. I said to him, "Allen, after all I've done to you, you're really a forgiving person." And he said, he basically said, "I've changed in where I am on these issues, and I really think that you would be a good person to represent the third province."

So, I became a candidate at a Provincial Synod, they call it, where they elect who is going to represent Province 3, which is, you know, is Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware—that area. And so I was a candidate for lay representative for this, and I figured this is a southern province, for the most part. There's no way that I'm going to be elected as this. And so I didn't take it too seriously. But I had to stand up and say what I thought on the issues of the day, and one of them was the issues of the church and gays and lesbians.

CG: Right.

JH: And so I was clear about where I stood, and I figured that would certainly finish me off in this thing.

CG: And you won!

JH: Well, so this meeting was held at the 4-H Center in Washington, D.C. I remember that. And I couldn't stay 'til the end, when the votes were taken. I had to leave to get back to Philadelphia for something, so I had to leave like noon on Saturday, and couldn't stay 'til 3 p.m., when the thing was over. And so I went home, and I never heard anything, and I said, "Well, I guess that was the end of that. It was very nice of Allen to suggest me, and everything." But I was just curious enough,

so on Sunday evening, I called up one of our fellow representatives on the third province's—whatever it was we were, one of the other representatives from the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Ruth Feisel, F-E-I-S-E-L, who was a wonderful schoolteacher at the Baldwin School. And Ruth said, "Oh, didn't anybody tell you? You were elected!" [Laughs]

CG: [Laughs]

JH: And so, but the joke about the thing is—well, and I was surprised, and I thought, wow! But the joke about the thing was that somebody said, they said, "John, do you understand, really, why you were elected?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, your last name is Harrison, and Harrison is one of the oldest names in Virginia, so they figured you'd be okay, no matter what you thought about things." [Laughs]

CG: [Laughs] That's great! So what did you do on the Executive Council, in sort of the short form, here? What did the—?

JH: You don't want to extend this?

CG: No, no. I mean, I do, but I don't want to burn you. What did the Executive Council do?

JH: The Executive Council consists of roughly one-third bishops, one-third clergy, like priests, and one-third laity. And it's a combination of representatives, about half from the nine provinces of the church, and the other half are elected directly at the General Convention.

CG: Right.

JH: And it meets four times a year, in a three- or four-day long meeting, and is the, sort of the operating board of directors of the church.

CG: It's General Convention between General Conventions.

JH: It's General Convention between General Convention.

CG: Okay.

JH: So it manages the work of the church during that time. And in addition to the—to the formal meetings four times a year, there were all kinds of committee and commission meetings that you would attend.

CG: And you were on the Executive Council when it was still Bishop Browning?

JH: It was entirely Bishop Browning the time that I was on it. The last—my term on the Executive Council ended with the 1997 Convention here in Philadelphia, and at that convention, Frank Griswold was elected Bishop Browning's successor.

CG: Right.

JH: And the meetings were held all over the country, because they tried to have them in different dioceses. And I also served on standing commissions during those—actually over a twelve-year period, first on Stewardship and Development, and we had meetings just as often as the—

CG: The whole Council?

JH: —the whole Council. And I was also, since I lived comparatively near New York, I was on the Agenda Committee of the Executive Council. So I took the train to New York, to meet for the day with Bishop Browning and others, to plan each of the four meetings. So I did lots of that. And several of the meetings of the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development, which I served on for six years, were held out of the country, in Central America and places like that, so.

CG: It must have been fascinating.

JH: It was fascinating. I did more traveling as a representative of the Episcopal Church than I ever had done any time before or since in my life.

CG: Right. Okay, so you were doing that, but then at some point you got involved with the ecumenical—?

JH: Yes.

CG: What was that?

JH: At the end of my term on the Executive Council, Frank Griswold and the president of the House of Deputies [Pam Chinnis] appointed me to be a member of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Affairs. That commission consists largely of clergy, but there are some nominal number of—I think maybe six, or whatever it is—lay people, who I guess are supposed to bring the clergy down to earth a little bit, or something. [Laughs] But we were there. But that commission also met four times a year in various places, as the need arose.

CG: And during that period of time that you were on there, some—some important things happened, right?

JH: Yes. The final [pause] agreement was worked out with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for recognition of mutual ministry, and essentially putting us and the Lutherans on the same relationship that we had with the Anglican Church in Canada, or the Church of England, and so forth, in effect.

CG: Called "full communion."

JH: Full communion, yeah. That's the right term. So that happened during my six years on that, and as I mentioned, I think, before—maybe not in this session—but we had a number of meetings sort of finalizing that agreement, several of which were held right near the

Lutheran Church's national headquarters, which is at the O'Hare Airport in Chicago.

CG: Tell me a little bit about some of the sticking points, because I know that it was initially talked about in 1997, and it was finally approved in 2000.

JH: Yeah.

CG: Because we approved it, the Episcopalians approved it, but the Lutherans didn't.

JH: But the Lutherans didn't.

CG: What were some of the sticking points, and how were they resolved? Because I mean, now it's a wonderful relationship, now.

JH: Yeah. I think, and my memory is—I'd almost have to go back and look at some documents and things to refresh my memory. But I think one of the sticking points was about the role of deacons, because the Lutherans didn't really have the same concept of deacon that—

CG: That the Anglicans did.

JH: —that the Anglicans did. And another, probably not really a sticking point, was the historic episcopate. I think that from our perspective, we didn't insist on the "Apostolic Succession" as a deal-breaker, but resorted to the use of the term "Historic Episcopate," as what we saw. And those were some of the issues that some parts of the Lutheran Church struggled over. But by the time they tried it the second time around—the first thing was called a Concordat.

CG: Right.

JH: And I forget the name we ended up with the second time.

CG: Call to Common Ministry?

JH: "Call to Common Mission," or something like that, or whatever. But I think that it was really just a three-year period where the Lutheran Church, some of their people, needed to digest a little bit further our understanding of historic episcopate, and deacons. I think those were the main things. And they eventually came to accept it.

CG: Were you involved with the Moravian thing at all?

JH: Yes. That—

CG: Because we're in full communion with the Moravians now, right?

JH: And as that was coming to a final thing, I went to a meeting down in Old Salem, North Carolina.

CG: Wow!

JH: Where we basically brought that thing to conclusion, so it could be presented to our two churches. I remember that—I'll always remember that meeting, because it was in the winter, and North Carolina has ice storms. And they had an ice storm during that thing that knocked out all the power in—there's Winston-Salem, and then there's Old Town, which is sort of like a suburb, where the Moravian Church has its headquarters. But the whole darn place was out of power for a couple of days. [Laughs]

CG: It must have been cold. Okay, let's again shift gears, because there's so much that's happened during your involvement. Let's shift back quickly to 1998, and the Reverend Barbara Clementine Harris is elected to be the first bishop, female bishop, in the Anglican Communion, which was not in all quarters received with a great deal of positive response, both in the Episcopal Church in the United States, but also in the Communion. And then there were some really ugly things going on in the church, in terms of dioceses wanting, or

bishops wanting to leave, and connect with other provinces in the Anglican Communion. What was that all like to live through? Or was it, again, you just lived through it?

JH: Well, no, that was very—that opens up a whole 'nother field of discussion. But first of all, I think Barbara Harris's consecration was probably in 1994.

CG: It was 1988.

JH: Yeah, you said '98.

CG: Oh, did I?

JH: Or was it '89? Okay.

CG: Yeah, she was elected in '88, and then consecrated, I think, in '89.

JH: Well first of all, my first—I first got to know Barbara Harris when she was a lay person. And she and I were on some diocesan committee in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. She at that time worked for Sun Oil Company as an executive of some kind.

CG: In communications, I think.

JH: Yeah. I can't remember what it was. And I subsequently got to know her because she and I served together as trustees of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. So I saw her in that role. And then, it was 1988; you're right, because I'm dating. And Barbara was elected, and there was sort of furor, because not only was she female, but she was also black, but not that that's—

CG: Well, she was a twofer in many ways, wasn't she?

JH: Yeah. And at that point, having known her as a trustee, and as a lay person, I went to her consecration in Boston, in some big arena. And we trustees of the seminary marched in procession. And I remember that the principal consecrating bishops were Bishop Browning, who

was one of my great heroes, and still is, and Lyman Ogilby was right up there, I think.

CG: Well, Allen Bartlett was there, too, because she was—

JH: Yeah, Allen Bartlett was there. That's right, Allen Bartlett. Those were the three.

CG: He was her bishop.

JH: And I think whoever the bishop in Massachusetts was. Maybe it was David Johnson at that point; I can't remember for sure. But anyway, it was a—it was a really wonderful ceremony, and I remember how Bishop Browning asked if anybody had any objections, and several people stood up, priests, and made long statements about why women—the Bible, it was against the word of the Bible to ordain women, and one thing or another. But at the end of all that, the events proceeded, and it was a great landmark for the church. It did, as you said, cause people who weren't ready for that across the whole Episcopal Church of the United States to begin to talk about breaking away from the Episcopal Church, and then also withholding support to the national church. And this was when I was on the Executive Council—or, I was soon after that on the Executive Council.

CG: Right. So you could see first-hand the results.

JH: And there were hateful messages that were sent to Bishop Browning and the Episcopal Church leadership. And at some point during my term on the Executive Council, we decided to do something like the Diocese of Pennsylvania had done with the prime consultants way back in Bishop DeWitt's era, and that was have members of the Executive Council visit all the dioceses of the church to talk about trying to hold the thing together, and that sort of thing. And I

remember that I visited—I can remember two, at least: the Diocese of Washington, which was—Washington, D.C., which was a very supportive diocese.

CG: Because they elected the next woman down there.

JH: Yeah, that's right.

CG: Jane Dixon.

JH: Yeah. They were very supportive. But I visited the Diocese of West Virginia, which was very much on the—oh, and the third one. I went to three diocese, and we didn't go two by two, so I was the only messenger. [Laughs]

CG: [Laughs]

JH: And a wonderfully warm support in the Diocese of Washington. I remember we met in a meeting room way up in one of those big bell towers, or something, in the Washington Cathedral. And I went to West Virginia, which was sort of straddling the fence about it. I think that the people were in favor of [but] the bishop wasn't so sure of the ordination.

CG: Right.

JH: But I went—my other assignment was the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

CG: Oh, boy.

JH: And that was where the messenger got shot! [Laughs]

CG: Bob Duncan, was he the bishop then?

JH: No, it was still Alden Hathaway, who was against it, but was gracious and nice. But his assistant, Bob Duncan, grilled me pretty hard about things.

CG: Well Duncan—Duncan had that reputation on a number of issues.

JH: [Laughs] So that was a sort of fence-mending effort, like the prime consultants had been. And I had those three experiences. But I must admit that the Pittsburgh one was one that was hard to forget! [Laughs]

CG: Oh, I would imagine so. Okay, so in your time, you've done all these wonderful things. Let's go back to one particular job that you had, function that you had. Why did you guys come up with Allen Bartlett? What was it about Allen Bartlett that—I mean, in retrospect, it's easy to understand why. But why, at the time, was Allen Bartlett one of your candidates, and clearly the frontrunner?

JH: Well, first of all, I will have to say that the work of a search committee is meant to be confidential.

CG: Right.

JH: And I don't think I'm in a position to disclose details of—of the committee's process, but I can maybe answer in a more general way. The committee came up with—and I'll try to remember them all—with five candidates. Allen Bartlett was one. Somebody named Dan—

CG: Burke.

JH: Dan Burke, who was the rector of St. Martin's, Providence, Rhode Island. Frank Turner was one of ours, and the then-Dean of the General Seminary. We made a report, and you could get this. I'm blanking on his name [Jim Fernhagen], but he was a very renowned theologian and scholar. But those were the candidates. And we went through a process that began with hundreds of names. There were nineteen members of our committee.

CG: Wow!

JH: Of our search committee, representing every element that you can think of, from the most conservative to the most liberal in the diocese. They were all known, respected people, all nineteen. And so we came up with a slate of candidates who we thought any one of whom could have done a wonderful job.

CG: And then the Convention decided?

JH: And the Convention decided. But one of the people that was not chosen by the committee was a very eminent priest in the diocese, Jim Trimble, who was the rector of Old Christ Church. And if I remember the voting—and he was nominated by petition, because there were people that felt very strongly that he should have been chosen by the committee as one of its candidates.

CG: Hold on one second. So, Jim Trimble.

JH: So Jim Trimble, who I had known for years, and who had served as one of our clergy deputies to the General Conventions. But he was nominated by petition, and there were the candidates the committee had nominated. And if I recall, in the voting from the first ballot onward, it was largely a contest between Allen Bartlett and Jim Trimble, and eventually Allen prevailed. [Interruption, pause in recording] One of the other candidates I just thought of was Carl Gerdeau, G-E-R-D-E-A-U, who was a priest who subsequently—who was not elected. It was Allen who was elected. But Carl Gerdeau eventually became the sort of chief of staff for Frank Griswold during his—

CG: He was from St. Louis, is that right?

JH: He was from somewhere in the Midwest.

CG: Midwest, yeah.

JH: But that particular election of Allen was really, the two leading candidates were Allen and Jim Trimble.

CG: Do you think that there was—do you guess that maybe the diocese wanted to have a new face, and that's why they went with an outsider?

JH: I can't—I don't have any idea why the voting went the way it did.

CG: Because, I mean, Lyman had been an insider when he was elected.

JH: Yeah, but he was a new insider.

CG: Yeah. I don't know.

JH: My guess, if I had to sort of guess at it, that the other candidates, except for Allen, the other candidates from the committee were somewhat farther in the sort of liberal direction in the church.

CG: Allen was more of a moderate?

JH: Allen was definitely on the liberal side, but maybe a little bit more of a centrist, and as you say, he was from outside the diocese, and I think that may have—but I can't—that's really pure guesswork. I have no way of knowing what motivated all you people who were down there voting, so. Do you remember? What was the name?

CG: Okay, let's stop.

[End Part 1/Begin Part 2]

CG: All right, tell me a little bit about, just in the time since Allen Bartlett retired, there's been a lot of turmoil in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, with Bishop Bennison. I know you moved away about, what was it, eight years ago?

JH: Twelve years ago.

CG: Well, okay. That's how much my memory is serving me. But why do you think Bishop Bennison, who followed – Charles Bennison – has had such a tough time with the Diocese of Pennsylvania?

JH: First of all, I should identify how I knew Bishop Bennison. He was a faculty member at the Episcopal Divinity School.

CG: When you were on the board?

JH: When I was on the board. And I had every sense that he was a very beloved faculty member, who taught, I think, pastoral theology or something. And the students, from all I could see, seemed to think he was great. And I thought he was an intellect, very bright. And when I learned that he was going to be a candidate for the Diocese of Pennsylvania, I was very pleased, and thought he would be great. And so I was always in favor of him. And I had known John Midwood, through my work in the diocese, for years. I thought he was a fine person, too, but I thought that there was this academic sort of cutting edge of Charles Bennison, and what I heard, I just thought he would be a good person.

CG: John Midwood was one of the other candidates?

JH: Yeah.

CG: Yeah.

JH: And so I was pleased when he was elected. Subsequently I learned, because I served on a committee that he called together for some purpose that I can't remember specifically now—I learned that he had a very, sort of authoritative decision-making process, that wasn't really consultative, but it was more—I don't know what you'd call it, exactly.

CG: Well, some people have described it as "my way or the highway." Was it that strong, or is that—?

JH: I don't know whether I would use those exact words. It was on that side, and my guess is that—but I wasn't here for most of the period of

his administration, but my guess is that [pause] that his very strong sense of having to make decisions, and so forth, that didn't always take into account full consultation with people that probably should have been consulted, probably is what led to the tension in the diocese. But I mean, that's just my—having missed most of his time, I would—so I would say it was more a personality thing.

CG: His father was a bishop from a different period, and I wonder if there might have been some influence in the way dad did it.

JH: That, I don't know.

CG: I mean, we can all play amateur shrink.

JH: Yeah. No, that I really don't—I don't know about. I mean, I knew that his father had been a bishop. But I think that, my guess is it was just that the electing convention, and especially somebody like me, who had not seen that side of his personality, probably weren't aware of that, and thought that he would be somebody who might give fresh, sort of, bright academic leadership to the diocese. And it turned out to be—

CG: The diocese has had a history of being a somewhat contentious place for bishops, I think. I mean, it certainly was for Bob DeWitt in your time, and for Charles Bennison; not so much so for Lyman Ogilby and Allen Bartlett. What is it about the Diocese of Pennsylvania, and you know it well, that creates that? Is it because it is so broad in its—in the kinds of people that are part of it? What do you think causes this kind of, in the diocese? What makes this the Diocese of Pennsylvania? It may be one of those questions you can't answer! [Laughs]

JH: I really can't put my finger on it. I know that for a long time there was sort of tension between High Church and Low Church, but I think that was pretty well gone by the 1950s or sixties.

CG: Well, certainly by the '79 *Prayer Book*.

JH: Certainly by the '79 *Prayer Book*. And so I really don't know what it is.

CG: Just politics?

JH: It's hard for me to say. I have no magic answer to that.

CG: All right.

[End of Interview]