

FLOYD, Anne

Gendered student regulations, cultural expectations, and atmosphere surrounding sexuality at Abilene Christian College in the late 1960s to early 1970s.

Key terms: expectations, gender roles, marriage, dating, dormitory, chapel, dress code, curfew, LGBTQ, lesbian, queerness, social awareness, political awareness, “Ideal Woman,” Kojies, “Campus Cocoon,” “authentic self”

Interview by Jenna Leigh Bonner, 2 October 2019

Anne Floyd attended Abilene Christian College in Abilene, Texas from 1968-1972 and received a bachelor’s degree in Secondary Education in history from the university. One of the few, well-known Church of Christ affiliated universities, ACC, currently known as ACU, presents its mission today to be: “To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.” Ms. Floyd describes here experience at ACC, specifically over the ways in which sexuality was dealt with – or, rather, not dealt with – and how gender was constructed. Much of this focuses on the expectations that were laid upon her as a student and, by extrapolation, the student body as a whole. She explores where these expectations came from and how they were upheld and enforced at ACC by direct and, largely, indirect means. This includes discussion on dress code, class makeup, and dating. Dating, she felt, was one of the largest ways in which an “Ideal ACC Woman” was defined, an area she recalls failing at to the detriment of her self-esteem. Though now identifying as lesbian and in a loving relationship with her wife, Ms. Floyd was not aware of her “authentic self” while at ACC, and issues of sexuality were never discussed on campus. Such social and political conversations and upheavals felt far removed from campus and Abilene as a whole, due – perhaps – to both the lack of information and lack of concern from the majority of the student body at ACC. This concept of a “cocoon” surrounding the campus body holds true throughout her accounts, with few exceptions.

This interview provides intriguing, human, and – often – genuinely humorous looks into life at ACC, while also existing as a valuable primary source into the ways in which gender and sexuality were constructed and assumed at ACC, stemming from its interpretation of Christianity and the expectations which were created and applied to those who gathered there to learn.

Jenna Leigh Bonner (JLB): This is an oral history interview conducted on October 2nd, 2019, in Abilene Texas. The interviewee is Anne Floyd, who attended Abilene Christian College from 1967-1971. The interviewer is Jenna Leigh Bonner. Okay! So, the first question is one that I get a lot, most times people are like, “Oh, you go to ACU!”, and that is: why did you choose to come to ACU or – at the time – ACC?

Anne Floyd (AF): Um, I grew up Church of Christ and AC... ACC was one of the top two. Pepperdine – because I grew up in California – so, Pepperdine and ACC were the...

JLB: The default options?

AF: Yeah, the default options, exactly. So.

JLB: So, by the time you graduated in '71, how did you feel about the choice to come to ACC?

AF: I was glad.

JLB: Still glad. Good.

AF: Still glad. Even all these years; all the revelations that have come about myself. I'm happy.

JLB: Yeah! So, and then the next question was: how do feel about the choice to come to ACC now that youre looking back all these years later?

AF: Still glad.

JLB: Still glad, yes. So, what was your major whenever you were here?

AF: I was history education.

JLB: History education, nice. Were there any sort of social clubs or ACC groups that you were a part of?

AF: I joined Kojies my senior year and then I was in the Big Purple for four years. That was my social life.

JLB: Being a band nerd?

AF: Exactly.

JLB: Outside of those social things were there any sort of events that you – like, ACC put on events – that you enjoyed attending and being at and interacting at?

AF: Homecoming, of course and the plays, the musicals. That was the big thing I can remember, always wanting – making sure – I went to. And then, on a much less grander scale or grand scale, was the – I think it was Tuesday night – devotionals on the steps of the admin building. I forgot what day it was on but we would just show up and be, you know, singing hymns and just... yeah, it was beautiful.

JLB: Do you remember who it was put on by? Or it was just a collective...

AF: Everybody, yeah. I think... I guess student council did. Not sure. Or just a tradition that everyone, you know, fell into.

JLB: Yeah, yeah. That makes sense. Um, so, outside of these sort of “introductory questions” the first questions that we’re going to get into are about ACC and sexuality. So, the first one is pretty broad: whenever you are student, did you feel pressure or expectations to date and marry?

AF: Yes. That was – in that generation back in the 60’s - a woman’s place was, you know, to be a teacher and then – or maybe a nurse – and then be ready to give that up if you got married and then have kids.

JLB: How did these pressures manifest themselves? Like, in what ways did you see them in your life?

AF: I think just background noise. Because, over the society that was the... the view, I don't think it was peculiar to ACU or ACC.

JLB: Yeah. So, where these expectations and pressures come from?

AF: *sing-song* Tradition!

JLB: Yeah, yeah! So is it coming from, like, the University itself directly? From other students? From family? Or just sort of a buzz altogether? It wasn't a necessary message; it was just an expectation.

AF: Right.

JLB: So it was just an expectation across the board.

AF: Across the board, yes.

JLB: And how did you respond to these pressures?

AF: Well, I felt terrible because I didn't date much, or if at all, and so I just felt like a loser because I wasn't fitting in within the expectation. I just felt there must be something really wrong with me.

JLB: Yeah. Just sort of coming from this whole societal background noise.

AF: Right.

JLB: That makes sense. Was there any sort of ideal partner that you were hoping for or searching for while you were here at ACC?

AF: Rich.

Both: *laughter*

JLB: Well, fair enough! I mean, it is a private school! So then, now a very necessary question is: was this just – you know – “yeah, I want to find somebody rich!” or did that just sort of come

from... Was this view of a potential partner or husband informed by ACC or Christian culture, American culture, at the time?

AF: Well, I had never dated much and so I figured, well... my mom would say, you know, "I met your dad when I was much older than what everyone said would be marriageable age" and so, I just figured, well he's gonna show up sometime.

JLB: And he better be rich! So, you really didn't have any strong formations of what this potential husband should look like. It was just, like, "I should have one."

AF: Yes!

JLB: Rich is good thing. We'll add that to the list. It doesn't matter anything else...

AF: Tall, dark, and handsome!

JLB: Yeah! So, very much informed by just the culture at the time said what a spouse is supposed to be like. So, informed by this, did you feel as though – personally – you were going along with this and this was something that was part of your own desires for your life? Or did you feel that you were going either, like, up a river or against it in some way?

AF: I thought I owned it. You know, because I was so oblivious to sexuality at that time.

JLB: Yeah. So, speaking of being oblivious to sexuality, do you remember any conversations about sexuality – which can be either, like, heterosexual sexual safety conversations or talking about non-heterosexual identities – going on in ACC environments in anyway?

AF: None. Not that I can remember.

JLB: Not classroom, chapel, students?

AF: No, no, not chapel or classroom. Oh, no. Not even chit-chat with friends.

JLB: So not even anything, like, condemnation or, just, no mention?

AF: No mention.

JLB: No mention, okay. And so, during this time did you have... had you built any sort of view on human sexuality, especially any sort of non-heterosexual identity, not for yourself, but just for other people who are existing in society?

AF: Never. So, I was so – like I said – oblivious to my own self and a society that didn't talk about those things.

JLB: Yeah, yeah, and especially not in Texas.

AF: Exactly. Or Church of Christ or conservative church

JLB: Yeah, and so, how does this view change throughout your life? Did it change at all while you were at ACC or did it change after leaving?

AF: Oh, it changed much later, in my late 30s early 40s, when I started to face my own sexuality.

JLB: Yeah, and do you feel comfortable walking through any of that, in as little or as much detail as you like?

AF: Oh, absolutely. It's no problem.

JLB: Yeah, so, what was that process like for you as it changed?

AF: So, the process began when I faced the sexual abuse I was subjected to as a little girl. That had been buried for years and years. So, coming to terms with that and... that was forever, it's felt like, to process that and heal from that. The greatest test was to forgive and I wrestled God on that for about 5 years. It was like, "I am not going to" kind of thing and I think of where God and Jacob wrestled, and God finally got Jacob to listen by, you know, touching his... throwing his hip out. Yeah, I was real glad he spared me that! But, so, clearing the decks for that and being able to forgive was just the greatest story, miracle in my life – I'd love to share that sometime - would be... that set the path for my life to take off, because I wasn't burdened and weighed down by unforgiveness. And so then I could face my – what I didn't realize – my greatest fear was being homosexual and so I was able to face that. And that took 2 or 3 years to become comfortable in my own authentic self and since then it's like, let's move on, let's live.

JLB: Yeah. So, do you think you can speak any to where that fear came from?

AF: I would have to say the Biblical teaching but – I would probably more accurate – biblical interpretation of teaching about that. I mean, there's only 6 scriptures, I think, that talked about homosexuality, just 6. So.

JLB: Yeah, yeah. I understand. So obviously current views being very different than the ones you had whenever you were at ACC.

AF: Right. I'm not even sure I knew what a homosexual was even back at ACC. Yeah, it was just foreign.

JLB: Yeah. I'm going to ask some questions later about how political and social awareness of outside issues was at ACC, so we'll come back to this about awareness of even just homosexuality existing. Are you aware – I'm assuming not at the time – now, looking back, that there were other LGBTQ students on campus in any sort of way? Or is that too much of a loaded question?

AF: No, no, it's not. I think looking back on it, I could think – well I bet – I'm wondering if so-and-so or she was or he was, but...

JLB: There was no "outness"?

AF: No, everyone was hiding, I believe.

JLB: Yeah. And so, there wasn't anyone that you were aware of who was out in anyway. Okay, yeah. So, the last question of this section: did the way in which the ACU administration, students, culture, etc. dealt with and viewed sexuality impact your time here at all? Does that question make sense? Was it too long of a sentence?

AF: No, no. It makes sense, and I would say I don't know. Again, because my own... being oblivious, and a time when it just wasn't talked about openly in society.

JLB: If it's not a blip on the radar, you can't be conscious of feeling unsafe in any way. So, was there any way in which you felt you didn't fit in with your peers or any sort of disconnected in any of those ways, looking back?

AF: Just, I was disconnected with... from myself. I wasn't feeling... If I can't connect with myself it would be hard to... I think I connected with people under friendship level stuff! But... ask me the question, I lost it.

JLB: I understand! It's okay, we can rabbit-hole. It's fine! The biggest thing was: did the way that ACU dealt with issues of sexuality impact your time here?

AF: No, because I wouldn't know anyone who may have been lash to me.

JLB: Yeah, yeah, of course. That makes sense. So, the next questions are about ACU and gender.

AF: Okay.

JLB: First one being: what did you... like, was there any sort of construct of an ideal ACU woman or an ideal ACU man, during your time here?

AF: Strong in their faith. The woman would be submissive to the man. Made me think of the, "man's the head but the woman's the neck; the head can't turn without the neck."

JLB: Oh, I haven't head that one. I've heard other ones but that are... So that would be, like, said on campus? Or was that just one that you're pulling up from...

AF: Yeah, I don't know where I learned that one

JLB: Yeah, just a lifetime of metaphors for submission in all of that... partnership.

AF: Yeah, exactly, yeah.

JLB: So, did you feel that you met these expectations?

AF: Probably not.

JLB: Did you have any, like, awareness at the time?

AF: Well I figured I didn't, because I didn't date, so, obviously, it's on me or there's something wrong with me that no one would want to date me.

JLB: Yeah. Something about something about me isn't ideal and that's why I'm not connecting in this way. Did you feel that the people around you met those expectations?

AF: I guess I did if they were dating, obviously, yeah.

JLB: Yeah! So, the biggest thing was finding permanent life partnership with somebody.

AF: Right.

JLB: Yeah, I think my parents refer to it as “getting your MRS degree.”

AF: Yes, I *hated* that. Golly.

JLB: Was that a thing that people said?

AF: Yeah they did! Way back then they said that. And even at church and all that, out in California where I grew up, it was, “Oh, you’re just going to school to get your MRS.” So, that... you know, if I swore back in those days, I would’ve... been in trouble!

JLB: Yeah, well. But obviously, like, I would assume that a lot of women weren’t coming here just to get married, like, not as the goal, but that was just this...

AF: Expectation.

JLB: Yeah, that was just this additional expectation.

AF: Right.

JLB: Which is interesting, because phrases like “getting your MRS” to me, sound more dismissive and sort of, like, mocking.

AF: Yeah, like, “You’re real student, you don’t have a serious desire to do anything in life other than get married.”

JLB: Yeah, which is funny because this comes from the same place these expectations and demands for marriage come from. So, both the expectation and then the mockery of people who fulfill that expectation.

AF: Yeah, you can’t win. Geez, between a rock and hard spot there.

JLB: So, can you think of anyone who intentionally ignored or defied this construct of, especially, ideal woman or ideal man at ACU?

AF: No, I can’t. I can’t recall anybody. It was a long time ago.

JLB: I mean, yeah it was a ways back, just a little bit.

AF: Like, just 50 years that’s. Half-a-century! My memory’s pretty good but...

JLB: Yeah, so between thinking back that far and the likelihood of...

AF: Being oblivious.

JLB: Yeah, yeah. Do you think that somebody who existed outside of these ideal expectations would have flourished at ACU or been accepted in any way? It’s a big hypothetical. Not in terms of sexuality necessarily, just gender.

AF: Yeah, it would be extremely hard. Because if that’s in your face all the time and – it was in mine and I was oblivious to it – have someone who is aware and that much more in tune to what the “standards” were that... I think it would be very hard.

JLB: Yeah. So, was there a big difference in majors for students between men and women?

AF: Oh, yes.

JLB: Can you talk about that any?

AF: Majors for women could be music and art, definitely education – you know, grow up, be a teacher – so then you can have your family and, you know, school schedule if you *have* to work. For men they had all the science. Of course, computer and all that stuff was just really starting. I mean, in the ad building there was these two rooms that were just filled with these giant computers, you know, you had the cards to fill it in... punch cards. So, that was just really all beginning. Anything with math and science typically was a male dominated thing.

JLB: Yeah. Do you think that was an official policy by administration in receiving or just sort of like, “Meh, look this happened. This is interesting how this is such a coincidence.”

AF: I don't think it was a deliberate plan. I think it was just following...

JLB: Following these expectations.

AF: Right.

JLB: We're talking about expectations a lot. That'll be the theme of this one.

AF: I hate that word. The e-word.

JLB: Yeah! We can refer to it like. Um, so how did religious culture influence gender roles at ACC during your time here? So like, in classroom, in Chapel, and churches that you would go to, in relationships... were there any stark differences in how ACU students, faculty, and staff would behave in these positions of leadership? Does that make sense? That got really long. Here, we've got some examples: we've already talked about the roles of women and men generally, but what roles did men and women take in campus life?

AF: Okay. So, women's... they were good for... uh, didn't mean it that way... They were available, I guess, for sponsorships; sponsors of women's clubs and stuff. Definitely education, educational courses, and so forth. But you never saw a woman on stage and Chapel. It was extremely rare to have a woman – she wouldn't lead singing – but to speak that was... I think one time I can remember that happening and everyone's jaws dropped like, “Is she gonna speak to us?”

JLB: Do you remember anything else about that one woman who spoke at Chapel? Or just that, “Wow!”

AF: I don't... I don't remember what she was talking about, wasn't even education.

JLB: Yeah. But it was something that was like, a shocking thing on campus...

AF: That a woman would be allowed to speak in Chapel.

JLB: That makes sense. Do you remember, like, a rough gender ratio within your classes? If it was education, like you said, then mostly women, correct?

AF: Right.

JLB: Okay. Were there any men in these classes?

AF: In the secondary, there were a lot of men. And I was secondary, I was going to go into Junior High or High School teaching. So, I competed with all the guys who want to be coaches from the history department, you know.

JLB: Yes, yes, I know.

AF: I was told many times on registration day, for 2 or 3 years, I need to change my major to elementary, so I can find a job, because these coaches were gonna come along...

JLB: Yeah, I come from the generation who they taught, so I am aware of that, of the coaches in history... yeah.

AF: Yeah.

JLB: So, that was even something that would come up in counseling, just that, you're not going to get a job that you do this.

AF: Right. You're going to have a very hard time if you... and they were right but I eventually did.

JLB: Yeah, yeah. So, in these classes that more mixed gender than some of the other education ones, who spoke up more in class: men or women? If you remember.

AF: I don't. I'm guessing men, though.

JLB: Yeah, that's sort of the assumption. Were you one who spoke up a lot in class?

AF: Oh, no.

JLB: What row did you normally sit in then? How far away from the professor would you be?

AF: I would be a little north of midway. Like, third row or so.

JLB: Yeah, like a healthy Church of Christ... come in and kinda fill some of the fist pews first and then work your way back, yeah. You don't want to be the people in the back of the church.

AF: Because, if you were in the back, we were told to move up, so, save my steps.

JLB: That's okay. That's a hot second to have to think back about who spoke up more. To what degree have you seen these roles changing today? I mean, I guess, one: I'm in the history department and I'm not pursuing education. I might pursue, like, collegiate, professorship, but... So that's at least one difference where we're coming in, vaguely, the same department, but we already have different expectations upon us.

AF: Right.

JLB: Can you think of any other ways that this has changed today?

AF: I'm guessing there'd be more women professors than when I was in school.

JLB: Yeah. Were there any woman professors when you were in school that you can think of?

AF: Yeah, the best one, in history, was B. Sprock... B. Spock... Spock, I think it was her last name, Spock. Spock or Sprock.¹ She was an awesome teacher. I had her my freshman year and I thought, "If I could teach like her, then I want to teach history." Because she would just sit there and tell stories. You know, you'd forget to take notes because you would just be there, chin in hand, just listening to her, enthralled. That's who I wanted... But, again, that was kind of secondary class, so... I'm not sure. I forgot the question again.

Both:

laugh

JLB: Women as professors or in, like, a faculty/staff roles.

AF: Yeah, definitely plenty of women for the elementary classes...

JLB: And then secondary it thinned out a little more, just like you said in general.

AF: Yeah, exactly.

JLB: That makes sense. Do you know about women professors in any of the other departments that you can remember taking classes with, for like the, you know, like, all the foundational "you gotta learn this stuff" courses?

AF: Definitely not Bible.

JLB: Oh yeah. Okay, yeah.

AF: Are there women now teaching Bible?

JLB: Oh my gosh... I don't think that... Hmm. I haven't had one.

AF: Oh my gosh.

JLB: So there is a way – if we are talking about things that have changed – that maybe, you know, ACC to ACU hasn't... uhhh. I know that there are. I've got to look that up. And it's interesting because, I mean, even me today I don't notice it in, you know, theological settings as much. So there's one way for my question about how things have changed that... uhhh... maybe hasn't changed so much. So, one of the one of the most interesting ways to look at different expectations – sorry, back to the e-word – for men and women in university settings are dormitory rules. So how were the rules... Oh! Got an eyebrow raise for that one!

AF: You did, because my my question is, certainly... are the dorms coed?

¹ Anne said at a later time that the professor's name was Bea Speck.

JLB: No, not now, but, like, were different rules for women's dorm versus men's dorms?

AF: Oh, of course.

JLB: Can you remember any of them?

AF: Oh yeah! 50 years later, man, right to the front of my memory. Girls had – girls, not ladies – girls had to be in earlier than boys. Boys could just pretty much leave anytime they wanted to, middle of the night, go off and get something to eat or whatever. Girls were, you know, locked down, pretty much the whole time.

JLB: Do you remember the curfew time?

AF: 10 on school nights and maybe, I'm guessing, midnight on weekends.

JLB: I think now it's... I want to say it's midnight... It's been a little bit since I've been in the dorms. But, oh yeah, we still have a curfew. But, if we're talking about these comparisons, I would probably say that now they're more even across the board.

AF: That's good. Dress code?

JLB: Oh! I haven't asked about dress code! Dress code is, you know... this is fine, this is dress code. At work I can take off the button up – I'm wearing a button up shirt over a sleeveless shirt – I couldn't take off the button up if I'm at work, but if I'm in class as long as it's... It's in the new student handbook where it's...

AF: I want to get one of those.

JLB: Oh, yeah! They're online. I can send you one! So, yeah. What were the dress code differences for men and women?

AF: Women wear... sk...sh...I can't even say it... skirts and dresses.

Both: *laugh*

AF: All the frickin' time!

JLB: So, how has that changed compared to the way that you've chosen dress outside of ACC?

AF: Freedom! Pants, baby. I told friends, "If I die and you burry me a dress, I will come back and haunt you!"

JLB: Fair enough. So, women weren't allowed to wear pants while on campus...

AF: Except in the dorm dorm, and maybe on weekends they could wear it outside the sacred castle, you know, of the dorm.

JLB: Yeah and how... were men allowed in the dorm at all, ever?

AF: Oh, no. There were visiting hours.

JLB: Yeah, we still have those.

AF: Yeah. But they certainly weren't allowed upstairs in the room, always in the parlor.

JLB: That makes sense, yeah. And so, what rules were there, sort of, structured around dating? Were there any that were in place or outside of...

AF: That's a good question, because...

JLB: Oh, yeah. You didn't date!

AF: Not having dated, I wasn't aware of them.

JLB: Weren't aware of them. Yeah, solid point, yeah.

AF: Curfew... yeah well, we talked about that, so. So, all of us non-daters, we get up in the rooms that looked out on the porch and watched as the dates walked in, you know, any good kissing we would cheer.

Both: **laugh**

JLB: So there was kissing at ACC!

AF: Oh, well, okay. Modest kissing, at the door.

JLB: But that still got applause.

AF: Well, *yeah*.

JLB: Because it's anything. Quick side hug would be like...

AF: Yeah, eh whatever. We want to see the action, you know, the lips.

Both: **laugh**

JLB: Yeah, yeah, of course. You gotta, you gotta... Let me see, checking my questions... make sure I don't have anything else. Yeah so, you know, dress code, dormitory. Were there any other rules that structured life for women differently than men, that you can think of? Pretty broad, I know, I'm sorry.

AF: No, that's okay. Those were the ones I best... most remember.

JLB: Yeah, dormitories and clothing. And then, a lot of the other ways in which men and women behaved differently were more of these... the e-word.

AF: **laughs** Yeah.

JLB: Yes. That's fair. So, um, obviously ACU/ACC has always prided itself on giving students a Christian education – that's our big drawing point, big tagline – as you perceived it, how did the Christian aspect of your education interact with the ways in which gender was “constructed” for lack of a more layman term.

AF: I think I understand...

JLB: Like, how much did they pull up those passages from Paul, in class, about how women should behave? Things like that.

AF: I think that would be more of a... would have happened more in a one on one or small counseling with people, you know, professors with students or whatever. I don't remember classrooms or Bible classes covering that.

JLB: Yeah, covering things like gender roles.

AF: Right. Because it was like the history of the Old Testament or, you know, look at the Psalms or whatever – well the Psalms might have provoked some – but it was more of just, that I remember, a classroom teaching situation. Yeah and, not really so much preaching, but more just a historical look at things.

JLB: That make sense. So, I guess the underlying part of this question is: do you think these expectations, that we've been talking about this whole time, were coming from ACU/ACC's interpretation of Christianity, in how it applied that to this Christian education?

AF: Yes, I do.

JLB: And mostly indirectly?

AF: Correct.

JLB: And then directly in these a smattering of rules that you can recall being affected by? No, yeah. That makes absolute sense. Can you think about any of these roles being preached in any sort of context within chapel or asides in class?

AF: I'm not remembering any.

JLB: Yeah that's okay. I mean, I would assume – and I'll run this by you before I assume – that it's such an ingrained e-word that you don't have to talk about it.

AF: Yeah, and coming from that! And it was in my background, my church background, as a kid coming into ACC so it was pretty... yeah.

brief technical difficulties which were edited out

JLB: Where were we... gender roles and Christianity. Oh yeah, how Christianity informed these perceptions of gender and how ACU continued that.

AF: How this *take* on Christianity...

JLB: Yes, yes. Which is another good thing to sort of segue into: how do you believe Christianity... or do you believe ACC interpreted this view on, specifically, gender – since sexuality wasn't as much on the radar – how they interpreted this Christian conception of gender correctly? Incorrectly? Are there places you think that wrong?

AF: That's a good question. Do I have time to think it through? I feel like I have to answer right now...

JLB: No, not at all. I can edit out long silences or we can, just, sit in them. It's fine.

AF: Ask it again?

JLB: "Do you think ACC was correct in its Christian interpretation of gender?" is a less wordy way to ask that.

AF: I would say no.

JLB: And how has that changed now that you are able to examine this in a different part of your life?

AF: How does what change? My viewpoint?

JLB: Yes, how does your current viewpoint of Christianity and gender counter ACC's view of Christianity and gender, at the time?

AF: I'm much more wide open to the possibilities for all, for both genders, maybe all genders – I'm still learning on that part – and it's a struggle because I'm very much, as teaching of conservative Christianity, very black and white. Gray was a color that frightened me immensely, so it's still up almost a knee jerk reaction to say, "this is right or this is wrong." But, I'm coming, I'm coming in, you know, coming to understand – I think – more clearly. Of course, immediately my thought was someone out there who might be listening would be thinking, you know, "She's just deceived."

JLB: Yeah, one thing I've heard before, both in terms of gender and sexuality, is that people are being literally deceived by the devil...

AF: Yes.

JLB: Yeah, so I've heard that, so I'm assuming that was also sort of in this Christian mindset back in the day. So, do you think that – just from what you know about ACU now in 2018, 2019 year – do you think that... from your perception, has their interpretation of Christian gender changed?

AF: From our talk earlier?

JLB: Yeah! From anything! Anything you gleaned...

AF: I would think there's an attempt to dare to look and see if there's something different. And I think there's an attempt, a desire, for some, to broaden it to see a more full picture of it, the definition.

JLB: Yeah, yeah. So, this fear of the gray area that you mentioned earlier, was that a just a normal thing of existence at ACU, among most, if not all, of your peers, do you think?

AF: Not sure I follow the question...

JLB: This black-and-white sort of conservative Christian thinking, where the gray area is terrifying, was that the standard view of the world at ACC, from your perception?

AF: Yes.

JLB: Yes. Sorry, these questions get a little curly in my head.

AF: No, no, that's okay. Yes, because again, I wonder how much of it is my being oblivious or how much of it is that I was more in line with the others were thinking and are perceiving. Maybe I was perceiving, and I don't trust that, I think

JLB: Yeah, of course. That's okay. You know, a core part of historical methodology is example of blah blah blah objectivity is fake blah blah blah, but that's the great thing about, specifically, this oral history project. It's that if somebody is listening to this and it like, "Oh, well that's something interesting from this time period. Let me go see what other people from the same time period were experiencing." That's why this will be great, is that this interview isn't going to stand by itself and reveal all of ACU between '68 to '71, it's, you know, standing with others. So, I believe this... yeah, essentially, last little section is sort of about ACU's or ACC's awareness of the outside world, outside, but this is more specifically with queer movements of the day. So whenever you were at ACC, were you involved in any sort of wider political or social movement?

AF: No.

JLB: Do you think anybody on campus was? And not necessarily being on the progressive side but also being on the conservative, standing against these new reformist or liberation movements.

AF: When you ask that, I remember a Chapel where, I think, people were speaking, or, two young men were speaking in Chapel about the presidential nominees of that year. And one was Goldwater, so who ran... Johnson, I guess, he ran against Johnson...

JLB: I know I'm a history major, but...

AF: I'm a history teacher! I think it was Johnson and... who'd I say the first one was?

JLB: Goldwater.

AF: Goldwater and Johnson and that's when Wallace, George Wallace from Alabama, was also running.² And I remember a kid getting up to defend or explain George Wallace and, you know, being hooted and booed practically.

JLB: Oh, so while the slightly more progressive one

AF: Well, no. He was more conservative, more nationalist, yeah.

JLB: Oh, okay interesting! So ACU would boo and hiss defending a nationalist? Oh interesting.

AF: Yeah. Maybe because, I don't know.

² Barry Goldwater ran a campaign for President in 1964, which was preceded by Wallace challenging Johnson in the Democratic Primaries, but I am not 100% sure which election this story comes from. I suspect it would be Wallace's 1968 Presidential campaign, during which he ran as an Independent.

JLB: I mean, a lot of this stuff that you're going to mention, it's our jobs as the interviewers to then go back and look at and gather to provide analysis...

AF: Okay.

JLB: Yeah, so it's not all, just, "Oh, well, Anne Floyd said this so, its fact!" You know, yeah, don't worry, it's okay. Whatever you remember is good. But yeah, okay, so ACC was like aware of political happenings in the United States.

AF: Yes, but the people – my take on it – the people, the kids, who were involved and aware were the minority. The rest of us were, you know, I mean, when – I was thinking about this earlier – when Martin Luther King was killed, I didn't hear about it, didn't know about it for a day or two after he died, after he was shot and killed, because, you know, there was no instant news, there was no social media, and I didn't have a TV and rarely listened on the radio. So, I was like... I just felt cocooned. I think a lot of us felt that we were just, you know, off on our own little world, safe little world.

JLB: Yeah, like ACC, and Abilene slightly more by extension, was separated in, yeah cocooned is a great word, cocoon from...

AF: I think the colleges overall, but you know. And then there were riots up in Ohio, Ohio State I think it was. And so there was a lot of kids there but we didn't have a real – that I remember – we didn't have a real active group of kids speaking out politically about issues of the day.

JLB: Yeah and the news didn't really penetrate into ACC very strongly.

AF: Right.

JLB: Yeah, no, that makes sense, it makes absolute sense. So, once again, sort of like with a lot of these other questions, of, "how did ACU with this issue?" the issue is, "well, we didn't?" just sort of as the answer. We didn't 'cause we didn't know it was a thing.

AF: Right.

JLB: Is sort of the continued answer.

AF: And if there were kids – well obviously there would be queer kids... I love the "queer", because stands for someone not knowing quite... or feels they don't fit into a standard definition... I like that...

JLB: Yeah, I use it kind of as a catch-all, because I've heard jokes, you know, like, "'LGBTQ people' like, what? all at once?" or "'LGBTQ person', like, that's a lot all for one person"... but yeah, so I use it more as an umbrella term...

AF: Yeah so, I know there were but yeah I would imagine their dealings, like, with administration or whatever, was very quiet. And, I don't know why I say that, other than it was such a secretive – and that's my take now – secretive about different issues. I mean, Black students were just being welcomed on campus.

JLB: Yeah, and is it "welcomed" in air quotes or...

AF: No, no, they were starting to include more and more Black students.

JLB: Yeah, that makes sense. So, I guess that's another question about political, social movements: how did – which isn't specifically related to this but, still just sort of as a side question – how were these students of color, specifically Black students, accepted or brought into this atmosphere?³

AF: I'm thinking of one who, he was just, just the greatest guy, he was in band, and he was just a hit with everybody. But that was his personality, I don't know how much...

JLB: Yeah, it's hard to speak on that.

AF: I think he was accepted for who he is and not for the fact that he was a black student, so I'm gonna be good Christian and...

JLB: So it's more of this concept of "color blindness" where as long as you're a good Christian, you can hang out with us.

AF: A good guy, yeah.

JLB: Yeah, no, that makes sense. That's a little bit of a side tangent, but I mean still about ACC being aware of these wider social changes and convulsions in certain ways. So, about these social movements, we've talked a little bit about, you know, civil rights things like that, was there any sort of awareness of gay rides or queer liberation movements nationally?

AF: Not that I know of.

JLB: Yeah, so I mean Stonewall happened '69...

AF: '68, no?

JLB: '69, I believe... I'm going to be embarrassed if its not. If it it's not, I'll make a note of it at the bottom of the transcription.⁴ But, I am fairly certain '69 and so that was a big deal, a big kickoff for a lot of... you know, gay rights movement already going on right, but mostly more assimilationist movements in the North and middle/upper class, white communities of gay people. So, this was a big, you know... being a whole riot, you know, against law enforcement, against all of that, so this being a very big deal – as far as I'm aware – on the national consciousness towards queer movements. Did any of that reach ACC in any way or even awareness that that's a thing that happened in New York?

AF: I have no idea. I'm guessing not, at least on campus because again no social medias would have been, you know, and not that big of access to television, and radio probably, but that would be on music stations probably.

JLB: So that would have been the same thing with major civil rights moments where the news just didn't penetrate into ACC. That's an interesting... So I guess we have two main themes of

³ I would like to add a small note here, just to say that Black lives – and the lives of people of color as a whole – are not merely nor inherently political.

⁴ 1969 is correct.

this and that is: expectations and where they come from, and also just sort of college cocoon that most things that are happening outside don't really penetrate during this time.

AF: Right.

JLB: Yeah, no. That's very interesting. See? There's a lot of good stuff from this experience that historians have now jumping off points. So, I have a couple of questions sort of to end with.⁵ The first one's very broad; you can answer however you like, don't have to answer, it's okay. But, what would you say to current ACU students about sexuality and gender while they're here at ACU? Anything to consider, to be aware of, to know from your experience and even outside of ACU?

AF: Be yourself; be authentic. God created you, as you are. And I know there's a whole lot of theology that's getting stirred with that statement. And God creates only good and he created you, you're good. So, know that even in in Abilene, TX, there are even older folks like me who would love to be your grandma and give you mom hugs, if you need it. And I believe you will be supported for who you are and I'm sorry if there are situations where you can't be and time will free you from those restraints. Love yourself, trust yourself.

JLB: Yeah, of course. So, thank you so much for coming and interviewing. I really appreciate it.

AF: Thank you so much. My pleasure, great pleasure. Thank you

⁵ This says "a couple" but this first question was a very nice ending point for the interview and the following questions were similar.

ACC/ACU Gender and Sexuality Project
Oral History Release Form

Date/location of Interview: 2 October 2019, Abilene, Texas

Narrator/ Interviewee: Anne Floyd

Interviewee Address: 3717 Wilshire Dr., Abilene, Texas

Interviewee date of birth: 4-22-1949

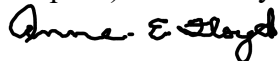
Recorder/ Interviewer: Jenna Leigh Bonner

By signing the form below, you give your permission to be interviewed, and agree that any recordings and/or additional materials (e.g., photographs) made during this project may be used by researchers and the public for research and educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations. By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold.


The audio file and transcript of your interview will become part of the ACC/ACU Gender and Sexuality Project, preserved by the ACU Archives and Special Collections as part of the University's online repository (digitalcommons.acu.edu). By signing this release you grant to ACU Archives a non-exclusive license to hold, preserve, distribute, and disseminate your interview for scholarly and historical purposes.

I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions, noted below.

Name (please print): Anne Floyd

Signature: 

Date: 10-14-19

Interviewer's signature: 

Date: 10-14-19

Restrictions: