

Judith Bailey

**Interviewed by Jean Seager
For Midway Village Museum
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Jean Seager: What is your name?

Judith Bailey: My name is Judith Bailey.

JS: And you live in Rockford?

JB: I live in, actually I live in Poplar Grove.

JS: And you're married?

JB: I am. I'm married to Andrew Bailey. We've been married for 37 years in May.

JS: And do you have children?

JB: I have two sons. One of my sons is Robert and the other one is Neal. Robert is 34 now and Neal is 32.

JS: And do they live here?

JB: They do not. They live in England.

JS: Where were you educated?

JB: In a little tiny village and I mean a village in Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent.

JS: How much education did you have?

JB: I only went to, until I was 15 and then my mom actually told me what I was going to be. She told me I was going to be a hairdresser. She got my job for me. I was working in the Saturday mornings and then two evenings in a salon that was being run by my, actually a friend of my mother's who looked after me in the holidays and then she went to college and learned hairdressing and I actually followed in her footsteps.

JS: Apprenticed with her...

JB: Yes and then I went to college to Manchester for, on Monday, for two years and took my exams that way so I, because she wouldn't really release me to do the whole session for a year. I had to do it in days because I was working and I couldn't afford it anyway.

JS: Then you were a beautician or a hairdresser?

JB: Yes. I became a hairdresser so my mom bought me a salon when I was 20 and I ran the salon with four apprentices until I got married when I was 23.

JS: Was your husband from the same area?

JB: Yes, well about a mile and a half away from us to be honest. In fact it was ironic really, I had to go 286 miles to meet him and yet he only lived 2 miles away from me.

JS: And why was that?

JB: Because we never went to the same schools, we never went to the same, we never socialized with each other because he lived further in the country than I did and we went to a place called Butler's holiday camp and I met him there.

JS: And that was a vacation?

JB: It was a holiday resort. It was my first time away from my parents and I'm 19.

JS: How long have you been in this country?

JB: 15 years.

JS: And what brought you here?

JB: My husband of course. His job. They put a notice on the board at the office in Gloucestershire. There was a position going in Chicago. Would anybody like to go? So Andy came home one Friday night, I'm cooking the evening meal, Robert was home from college, Neal was just lying around the house and he said "I've got opportunity to go to America. We have a week to decide." I said, "Pardon?" "We have a week to decide." I said, "Well don't you think we ought to have a powwow around the table?" "Well, yes, we'll have it now." So after the evening meal we took it to the boys directly. We said "Do you want us to go?" and they were so shocked neither of them said anything at first. It was too much to take in. So I said, "Well you're going to have to give us some time." and by the following Friday Andy was on a flight going to Chicago. I didn't go with him and the very first time he came over here, he came over for a week to look at the job and then he came back.

JS: What kind of job was it?

JB: It's an engineering job but he works with precise measuring equipment, laser beams and a laser equipment which they first had to research to make sure that no one in America could do his job and then they researched that and then they said "Yes, there was nobody who could actually perform the job so he could come then."

JS: He works for an English company?

JB: An English company called Renishaw.

JS: Is it in Chicago?

JB: It is in Hoffman Estates?

JS: And where do you live?

JB: I live in Poplar Grove.

JS: So he commutes?

JB: 55 minutes a day. Well it's about, 100 miles there and back.

JS: And whereabouts did you live in England, as far as. . .?

JB: The Midlands.

JS: The Midlands. . .

JB: It's nowhere near London. It's up the country in the middle of the country.

JS: what was your life like back in England, say when you were growing up?

JB: Middle-class. Parents owned a grocery shop, mom ran a grocery shop. My father was an insurance gentleman at first and then he decided to help mom out so he was working in the wholesale department while mom worked in the shop. She also had properties, mum had two houses and the salon that I ended up doing my training in, she owned that too. So my mom had property. We were quite well off. Love wise she was a little bit too busy making money. I didn't see much of my mom only on a Thursday afternoon and then she's in the hairdresser's.

So to be honest being brought up, we were brought up with a Christian background. We went to church every Sunday morning. Dad insisted on only going to church on Sunday. We couldn't do anything else we couldn't play football or cricket or anything any other amusements whatsoever. You had to just get up and go to church, read or sit, which was Sunday. And Saturday mom worked so to be honest there was love there but it wasn't a lot of physical love it was work work work work work. My mom was very much a snobbery person. She wanted to get on in life and she knew she wanted to leave [Blurton] and go to [Baillieston]. That's like going from a slum to the Ritz in standards. It's literally climbing the ladder and you're there when you get to [Baillieston].

JS: How about your father?

JB: More down to earth, more loving, more caring. He didn't want the position, he didn't want to move. It was mom. Five years every Sunday afternoon my dad would take her out in the car just to look at areas so she could find where she wanted to live and it took five years to find this house.

JS: You did get there then?

JB: Oh mom was insisting on getting us there. So to put it in perspective, my father was in the garden one day, doing my mum's flowers and the lady across the road rang my mother up and said "That gentleman's working extremely hard in your garden. Do you think he could come over and do my gardening?" And with that my mother whipped my father in, told him to put his best suit on when he went out to do the gardening. If you've ever watched Mrs. Bouquet on the TV "Keeping up Appearances" it's called, it's my mother to a tee.

JS: Did you have siblings?

JB: I had a brother who hated my guts. He tried to kill me when I was two. He put a cushion over my head. Didn't want me to make the noise.

JS: He was older?

JB: He was 2 1/2 years older than me.

JS: Did that improve?

JB: No. No, he denies most of the cruelty that he gave me but I can understand it because my mom gave, we were looked after by the lady who made the hair who became the hairdresser, or my boss before my mom gave me the salon. She used to look after us after school. We had a series of nannies before that, but this one came in when I was about six. So six to nine she looked after us after school and in the six weeks holiday, but at nine, see my brother then would be 10, 11, 12, he would charge of me and he didn't want the responsibility.

He hated it and I was one of these people that kept running off because I wanted my freedom after school and then, so that he knew where I was and my mum wasn't going to come home until seven o'clock in the evening from the shop, he'd lock me in the toilet so he knew where I was. And then we were given chores to do. I had to set the table, Trevor was supposed to light the fire, I was supposed to, he was supposed to peel the potatoes and I was supposed to tidy up my bedroom and his bedroom and maybe Hoover up. You know take the Hoover out. Well Trevor didn't like doing the jobs so he would threaten me if I didn't do them all. And the one week I fell on my knee at school with the cages underneath the coats and it was a very very nasty cut and he used to take the bandage off and open the cut on my knee for weeks and weeks and my father couldn't understand why it wouldn't heal.

JS: You didn't tell?

JB: No, because he said if I told he would hurt me more.

JS: Do you have any relationship with him now?

JB: He denies all of it and he tries, since he's grown up, because I mean he's 63, when I'd been home a few times he's made an effort to, you know, make sure that I have, cause he's got quite a lot of money now, he owns a business and he married late in life and he's got two teenage children now and he's got this wonderful business so money is not an object. It flows like water so when I go over and I stay with them I get the red carpet. And he denies all that he did to me. He thinks it was a myth in my imagination to gain sympathy.

JS: So you decided to come in just a week's time?

JB: Well no, Andy decided, he came over to see the job. Came back and he liked it. And he said "Judith," he said, "I think this is going to be a great opportunity for me. Can you come on board?" Well I've never left England. I've never even been on a plane and I would be leaving all my friends and one in particular who I really liked, an elderly lady that, she was a bit like, I seem to have gone through my life finding ladies, or the Lord has put ladies in my life, that have been my mom figure. Wherever I've gone I've ended up having a mother figure and she was, Amy was my mother figure while we lived in Thornbury which is on the outskirts of Bristol where my son lives now.

JS: Difficult to leave her?

JB: Very. Especially when she died two years later and I went home. She ended up with cancer of the breast and died. I went for the funeral. I actually went over specifically for the funeral.

JS: You had never traveled anywhere then?

JB: Never. Never been on a plane. We couldn't afford to go on holiday with the children when we were first married because when I first got married at 23 I went on my honeymoon to the caravan. Mum and Dad had a caravan in Wales. It's a bit like a mobile home, you call the mobile homes, we call them caravans. My brother's got one now in the same area. And we would go, because we couldn't afford a honeymoon because we bought a house the year before we got married, and we saved for five years. I courted him for five years before we married and in that time we saved enough to put a deposit on a house, and buy and have a mortgage. So we had that the year before we were married and we pulled walls down and we rebuilt things and put a fireplace in it, we did no end, we put a huge kitchen on it. So when we were, I lost my train of thought for a moment...

JS: Your caravan.

JB: Yeah, okay. So we couldn't afford a honeymoon so we went to the caravan. And of course I got pregnant on my honeymoon and I didn't realize I had an invariable cyst on the neck of the womb, because I didn't have any treatment before I got married. And I produced twins, a boy and a girl, because the egg got split and unfortunately the cyst grew and the babies didn't. And at 7 1/2 months I was dying. I was working in my salon,

and it was Saturday morning and I said “I'm dying” and nobody seems to be listening to me and my mother thinks I'm going around the bend. Andy thinks I'm being a spoiled child and if somebody doesn't say something to me I'm going to be dead by tonight. So I made arrangements to get myself to the hospital and everybody joined me there and the next morning I had an emergency section and the babies had been dead in me a month and they were, died, already gangrened and that was poisoning my system and the cyst was 9 pounds in weight and I had 24 pints of water in me. I was 60 meters in circumference around me and I had to have blood. I had to literally be washed out it was that much poison in me and I was dying with the poison of the babies. They just burnt the children, I never saw them. So my first year of marriage was hell on earth because I sat in a chair then for six months in total depression and to this day if it hadn't been for Andrew I think I'd have committed suicide because he got me out of it. He stood by me.

JS: Were you able to have more children?

JB: Yes, I've had two boys. Which they actually said I wouldn't because of the damage but I did the Lord blessed me and I had two, one after the other.

JS: So you got all your arrangements made in just a short time to come to the United States?

JB: Yeah, in the end Robert went back to the university. Neal said “Can I come with you? Because at the moment I've just finished college and there's nothing else that I want to do.” So he did and he was into music, he wrote music and he's self-taught himself to play the guitar, and over here you can buy guitars a quarter of the price that you can buy them in England so of course he came over and we bought him a couple of guitars and he was here for about six months.

But he was so restricted here. He didn't like it. Because he'd lost his visitations to the pub. And he couldn't smoke the way he would. He never smoked in my sights but we knew he was smoking outside and he couldn't go out, he couldn't drive a car because he got no driving license here, so he felt so he was in a prison cell and he was 19 years of age. So after six months he went back. So both my boys had a real, you know normally the children leave the nest, well we left the nest and the children had to fight for themselves. And on reflection I think the Lord blessed me in a way. At the time I didn't appreciate this because they were my whole life because most of the time Andy was away I brought the kids up, I brought the boys up, because even in England the same job he was doing there he came to America to do, he still went all over the world. Well, he went to East European and he went to Italy, he went to France, he went to Belgium, to went to Austria doing the job. So really I didn't have him with me then in England. So I brought the boys up and they were my life and all of a sudden they were taken from me.

So I'm here in a foreign country, I literally, we had a bit of an upset actually the week we first arrived. Robert came with us just for a holiday. He says “Can I come from a holiday? Neal's been. It's not fair. I want to come too.” So when we came over for our first six months, this is before we sold the house, we came over for our first six months,

Robert came with us and it was around about November and he had Christmas with us and then he went back but Neil stayed. And we. . . I lost my train of thought again sorry . . . yes we had quite a few problems...

JS: Did you live in Poplar Grove at that time?

JB: No we lived in Schaumburg and when Robert went back, I went back with him and left Andrew here because I've got to sell the house. And that was something I've never done in my life on my own. And again I was on my own having to deal with trying to sell the house. So anyway, it took, we bought high and sold low. We bought it at 96,000 and we sold it for 72,000. So we had to take that loss so that I could get back. So Andy came over to sign on the house. We had this big party, it happened to be our 25th wedding anniversary, my eldest son's 21st birthday, Andy leaving the job, and us going to America so we had this cake made and each corner had something to depict what was happening in our lives. And we had this big, big party and the next morning we literally got on our flight and said goodbye to the boys. I think I cried for three quarters of the time on the flight and I just felt like I'd just lost part of me and I had this big hole in my heart and Andy couldn't fill it and it was really, really, really hard and he came . . .

JS: Empty nest plus being far away?

JB: Yeah and I was put in a multi-storied apartment, seventh floor up, overlooking the trash cans at the time. I moved later on because I couldn't stand the view. And we were there for four days and Andy went to work and the following day he flew out to, on one of his trips and I added up and in the two years my first two years here I actually was with Andy for six months. I had no car for the first month, in fact it was more than that, it was four months I had no car. I had to pass my test. Everywhere I went I had to walk. I was walking in Schaumburg trying to cross the road, this is before they made it into an eight lane, six lane, it was only a short lane so I could get across the road to get to Jewel's and do my shopping but I was in this apartment all on my own in a strange place. I really, really struggled.

JS: Did you make some friends though?

JB: Well fortunately, Andy made sure that it had a pool and it also had a Jacuzzi and it also had a gym because I loved working out. So I used to go down and work out and I met people that way. And I actually met another English girl who happened to be working, she'd been here with her father, and her father and her mother split up and he came to America, so in the early part of her life she actually went through some schooling here and then went back to England and then she came back because her boyfriend came here, like Andrew, not with the same company, but he was English too. And she came and she was in the receptionist, they wanted this English voice on the receptionist, and I walked through and I just said "Hi, how are you?" and she said "English?" and I said "Yeah" and she said "Whoa, so am I!" you know. So we got together and she actually was my first link to Barrington Church, I don't know whether you know Barrington Church, her and her boyfriend at the time were going and they, she

took, she said “Why don’t you. . .” I’d been searching for a church for a while because I felt so lost and so empty and so alone, that I really wanted some grounding, I wanted some purpose for being here. I, when Andy was away, I just didn’t know why I was here. When he was here I felt great but when he was away, what am I doing here? I can’t work, I can’t do anything so she took me on the Sunday and then I went the following Sunday and by this time, of course Andy isn’t a Christian yet, he’s still facing the other way.

So on the following Wednesday I had nothing to do so I volunteered and I was up making tapes and working full-time virtually volunteering at Barrington Church. And then six years ago Andy became a Christian at Barrington Church, which they always say you’re supposed to be equally yoked with your partner, well we’ve been married for all of these years and we weren’t equally yoked. But now we are, we know the difference, we can see the changes that evolve between husband and wife when that divide isn’t there when you actually are feeling the same and having the same feelings for the same God it’s wonderful. You do connect better and it helps the men to soften their hearts toward situations and problems in your marriage when a man isn’t thinking about someone else, and is always thinking about himself, he can’t see that it something that’s hitting, hitting, hitting against a relationship, so that was quite nice.

JS: So how long were you in Schaumburg then before you came out here and why did you come out to the Rockford area?

JB: Alright, well we were in Schaumburg in an apartment. I moved three times in the same complex in different apartments and we were there five years. Am I right? Yes. And then we move to Elgin and bought a house because Andy was sick of apartment living. I liked apartment living because I like the company. He is an island or at the time likes to think he’s an island, but now he knows he isn’t because he’s found Christ. But then at the time he thought he was still an island because he still wasn’t a Christian by the time we went in Elgin. So we bought this house in Elgin, built by a builder, it was a log looking house, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, all the trappings and we stayed there for four years. And then Andy’s always wanted, he’s like a frustrated architect my husband, he may be an engineer but he really should have been an architect, and he wanted to design and build his own home and he always wanted that, that’s one of his dreams, and no matter what I said he had to do it.

So we had the flyer through the door and I saw this flyer and I saw this house and I said to him “Well this looks quite, . . .” I like water you see and ships. It had a point on, it was an unusual shaped house, it looked like a ship to me and I said “Ooh, I like this house, Andrew” and he said “I don’t”, so I said “Oh, okay.” Well, I’ve learned in the years that you have to put ideas into a husband’s mind and then wait for it to percolate through to his soul before he has the idea and then it’s a wonderful idea. But you tell him, “No, sorry.” He’ll hit his head against a brick wall. Okay, so four days, four or five weeks later this flyer I didn’t get rid of and we were leaving church on Sunday. I said “Andy, it’s a lovely day, the sun’s shining, lets go and see where these houses are.” “Oh okay, that sounds a good idea. We could do with getting out in the car.”

Well at the time, when we clocked the mileage from Elgin to Rockford he kept thinking, this is too far, you know. I will have to commute this journey to work. It's just under an hour. Anyway, we went, we saw this gentleman named Dan. He took us around the buildings and the lots and the plots and the land and we found this tree lot within four hours of being here. We bought a piece of land, we had no intentions and we did have buyer's remorse, to be honest, we went home and we wished we hadn't, we wished we'd looked further because on reflection we don't like being in Candlewick, because there's too many rules and you have to pay association fees and they keep going up. So on reflection we should've said no and looked about, but I was wondering if it wasn't a God thing really because Dan who sold us the land introduced us to a church northeast and we went there for about two years before Heartland opened 18 months ago and now we go to Heartland. So I think you are put in a place, sometimes you don't know why, you have no control over why you made that decision. We made, English people don't make decisions like that normally. We pontificate, you know, for hours and days and within three hours we committed ourselves to this piece of land.

Well Andy went home, and he drew this fabulous house, I mean, he spent seven months designing this house. We have now got this house in Poplar Grove, it stands out like a sore thumb to be honest because it's so English. It's brick. It's got tariffs on it, and it looks like an English house from the outside and the inside. And it's his dream home but now we know that when he retires, when he's hoping about 68 if the Lord blesses him and his health, and we'll then have to sell the house and really downsize because we will be living on his pensions which aren't that great.

JS: Will you stay here?

JB: Well funnily enough this last week, in fact Monday night, we actually went to a lawyer to decide about a will and decide, and those, we need someone to stand as guarantor for us for our boys, because we can't use, we've got a will in England which the boys are representing, but in America you have to have someone else in case Andy and I are in an accident together in a car, to be able to look out for the boys. The money won't automatically go to them, it has to go through a second person who's living in America.

JS: Even though they're of age?

JB: Even though they're of age. You can have a bank person do it for you, you can put it in a trustee, a trust that can do it for you, or a person. So funnily enough she asks us the question, where you want to be buried. And I think cremation's going to be the best idea. Andy doesn't want to be cremated, he wants to go in a coffin, but I think it's difficult to ship a coffin home if he wants to go England. Whereas you can take a jar on his knee so vice versa I don't know. It depends on what financially we end up with when Andy actually retires. We're going to look at the finances, look where we're living, look at how much the mortgage, if we have a mortgage or not, and then decide whether it's going to be cheaper to stay here or go to England.

JS: Did you know anyone here before you came?

JB: No, not a soul.

JS; Andy did though?

JB: No, not a soul.

JS: When you first arrived then you went to that apartment . . . that was your first place?

JB: Yes, yes.

JS: Is there anybody that helped you find that apartment, that took you around?

JB: No actually, they just gave us a map and told us to go and look.

JS: Is there anybody now in your neighborhood, you're in Candlewick, are there other English people living there?

JB: Funny you should say that, ironically again, I was thinking about getting another job and one of the interpreters here, Marguerite. . .

JS: Can we back up and tell us you're currently or you have been employed here?

JB: I'm sorry. I was employed here at the Midway Village. I was here for two years and. . .

JS: And your position?

JB: And my position was an interpreter but I have to work weekends and it's been a bit of a strain on my marriage. So I decided in January of this year to terminate my employment and just work for the Civil War [Living History Days] which is coming up in May and anything that will, you know anything comes up that is Monday to Friday that Lydia will allow me to do then I will do but no weekends.

So I was thinking maybe I could work in the kitchens at school because I would have all of the holidays. So I rang Marguerite because I knew she was a schoolteacher at Caledonia School, she was a pianist, a piano teacher and . . .

JS: And this is your neighbor?

JB: This is a friend that lives in Candlewick Lake and she gave me the number and the lady on the other end said "No you don't need me, you need this other number." So she gave me this other number and I must've been in America too long because I didn't understand, I didn't realize when I first heard this voice, that she was English and I thought I've been here too long. This young lady was named Sue and she says "Where do

you live?" and I said "Candlewick Lake." She said "So do I." And I said "You don't, do you?" and she said "Yes, I'll bring you a form home," she said "and we can have a chat."

So she came about 4:30 that day and brought an application form for working in the kitchens in the school and we chatted, and talk about ironic about how two people can be on the same path and never meet. She only lives, or lived, in England a mile and a half from Bristol where I used to live. She came over six years before we did with her second husband, with just a suitcase and what she stood up in, and he had a job in Chicago, an upholstering job, and she was going to work with him. Then she ended up living in a house in Elgin which is only two blocks from where I lived in Elgin. She now lives in Candlewick Lake. She's been here two more years more than I, no five years more than I have and now she's going through a divorce from the gentleman, the second husband, and she's trying to sell her house desperately and she doesn't know whether to go back to England. She's got a son here who is married with three children in Candlewick Lake who actually is the English builder who's been building all the new houses in Candlewick Lake. I thought, whoa look at all those connections! She goes to Heartland Church. I just couldn't believe how we'd been going down the same road and yet none of us, we haven't met and since then I've become quite friendly with her.

JS: How did you go about finding a job? Did you start working after you came to this country?

JB: No. I couldn't work because I had no green card and you can't work unless you got a green card. I had a Social Security number which actually said on the card, null and void for work. You have that when you first arrive, you do have to have a Social Security card but you, and I couldn't have any credit, we had no credit when we came here. We couldn't even buy a car when we came here because we had no credit. I couldn't buy a coat on credit. I couldn't get any reductions because I had no credit. The company had to loan Andrew the money to go and buy the car so he could get to work because you need credit over here whereas in England we don't have credit. They do now but when we were there they don't. Everybody earned the money saved it and spent it and that's how I was brought up. You don't have credit, you live within your means. You don't live beyond your means. Whereas here without credit you're nobody. You don't exist.

JS: Well when you first got here then how did you get around?

JB: I had no car, the company loaned Andrew a car at first and of course he was away, so it took about a month and the company loaned us the money, we bought a car and then we paid it back with it once we got our credit which was stupid. But once one person guarantees you, which the company did, all these credit cards then, all these credit card people wanted our money because they realized we got money in the bank but nobody would make that first step.

JS: Did you find it hard to find your way around?

JB: Very. I've had to learn. I'm not a good map reader. I'm not a north-south and I couldn't understand why you hadn't got any decent street names. You know, I mean in England you get a street name, you get a sign and it tells you where you've been where you're going and where you are here. And here we have numbers. I'm sorry I can't find my way around numbers. Numbers just baffled me completely. At first, when I first came here, this might sound utterly ridiculous, but for me to go from A to B I could only do that and then I could do what I was doing and then I'd have to come back the same way. I didn't dare once I was at my destiny go somewhere else and come back here because I couldn't do it. I can now but I couldn't then.

JS: When did you finally get the job then?

JB: Well ironically I was in a small group with Northeast Church. . .

JS: In Rockford?

JB: In Rockford, yes Northeast Church is in Rockford. And Molly who actually works at the Museum and Gwen were in my small group and I said to them could they possibly, was there any jobs going at the village where they worked? And they said well, why don't you come and be an interpreter you'd be absolutely fabulous with your accent. I came here, had an interview with Lydia and they wouldn't let me leave without signing.

JS: Do you enjoy it?

JB: I absolutely love it and I'm sad that I've had to give it up. It wasn't my choice and had Lydia allowed me to do Monday to Friday then I would still be here and working. I have a wonderful report with children and grown-ups. Somehow I seem to have a face, sorry, I seem to have a face that when I smile people want to approach and speak and I have a feeling of warmth I think in me that radiates out and people want to be around me and I enjoy that.

JS: So you think your English accent and your. . . has anything to do with it?

JB: Absolutely, absolutely. It's the thing that people want to do and listen to. They are fascinated by the English accent and also my interpretation of words and the way I use my, I just talk as though I'm talking to an English person and they have to pick it up and they laugh and then I have to wonder why they are laughing and then they tell me what I've said. It's a bit like, my son was over here, you might find this, I don't know whether you'll use this but it's rather funny. Neil was here and of course I told you he smoked and he did get involved in the complex with some young ladies who were the receptionists for the company and he was in one of their apartments, there was about six couples and him and he was just wanting to go and have a smoke and he just said "I'm could, I'll, I'm dying for a fag." And everybody in the room just stopped what they were doing because his British accent came out and they all burst out laughing and he couldn't understand why they were laughing so he walked out of the room and went outside and lit up and

that, they knew then what he was referring to, so when he came back they told him what he'd said and he was astonished.

JS: Do your boys come visit very often?

JB: Robert came at Christmas. Neal that's another thing. Unfortunately because of my choice to come here, I had to choose between my boys and my husband and you know in biblical text you cling to your husband and once you marry you stay with him no matter what. Well because of that my boys have drifted away from me and been very self, reliant on their own wits. Neil, Neil didn't know what he wanted to do. He was trying to find himself, he kept saying when he was 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, still trying to find himself. And he asked dad if he could finance him to go on a trip around the world and we dealt in with it and if you keep going on, it's like a student's card, if you keep moving forward to your destination and then you can come back. You can do it on one ticket. So we purchased a ticket for him. So he went to Nepal and then he went to Australia and then he went to New Zealand and then he came back to America and then back to England.

Well he had had a relationship with a young lady but he wanted to end it. So he said he didn't want her to follow him or anything he just wanted some peace in his life and he was into Buddhism. So he went to Nepal and stayed there for a month and then he went to, while he was in Nepal he had this deep urge to book himself into a monastery for a whole month in what he stood up in and he came out a complete different person. Much more open and kind and considerate and, he was a changed boy or man. Then he went to Australia and the girl had won and she actually came into some money. It was a God thing really. And she flew to Australia and then to New Zealand and met him and stayed with him for six weeks. But he knew that if he wanted to come to see me he couldn't bring her because I wouldn't allow her under my roof unmarried so she went back to Australia and he came to see me, or to Andrew and I. He stayed for six weeks and then he went back to England. She stayed in Australia for nearly a month or six weeks and then she came back and the following year they went to Australia, they saved up, they went back to New Zealand and got married. And I wasn't even there, I don't even feel like he's married to her, but he is. Then on their honeymoon on the way back he brought this total stranger, I didn't even know her second name, to us to stay for a month and then he went back to England. And now they're living together and trying to find, it's very expensive in England at the moment and he was living with his mother-in-law and then the sister, the wife's sister joined him with boyfriend and it didn't work out quite well. So Neal and Caroline rented a house but found it tough to make ends meet so now they're going back to the mother and the sister's been totally decorating mother's house up because mother's now found a toy boy of 26 and she's 58 and she's living with him so now Caroline and Neil are starting in the mother's house with a freshly painted house and hoping that's going to work out...

JS: Things are getting better?

JB: Yes. So I've missed his wedding so that was. . . there's no pictures, they haven't got a photograph of the wedding or anything, they didn't take one picture. They have no

memories, only what's in their own minds, no memories to share with anyone. I find that very strange but that's the way they wanted it.

JS: Are you at all active in politics?

JB: No I can't be. I am at Northeast Church, sorry not Northeast Church. I am at Heartland cause actually since I've packed up here, I've felt since I've packed up here at the Museum, I feel a bit lost. So I'm now working in the bookstore at Heartland and I'm actually going to be helping out with greetings and I'm hoping that's going to materialize into something unless something comes up in another capacity I don't know. I've applied for a job at a bank and I've heard nothing from that so we'll see.

JS: So you are waiting for your citizenship? Where are you in this?

JB: Well the problem with that is Mr. Clinton changed the goal posts when he was in and Mr. Bush hasn't changed the goalposts back. So once you've got your green card, which we've already had it now for 2 1/2 years, you have to wait five before you can start to do your citizenship and then it takes 2 1/2 to get it. So we're in that position actually.

JS: How did people treat you when you came here?

JB: As an oddity, as something. . . they liked it, but I felt that I was on stage performing with my accent just to amuse them, a lot.

JS: Did it feel like you really came to a foreign country?

JB: Yes, absolutely.

JS: Even though people spoke the same language?

JB: The money's different, the social life's different. You Americans are very materialistic, you like possessions, you like gifts, you like things around you, you like change, you like season changes, you even like changing in your home. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, you seem to have to have a different picture on the wall for a different time of the year, different curtains up. You seem to have to have a lot of parties, a lot of reasons for life, whereas I never went out in England. Only for my wedding anniversary or my or a birthday. We never went out for meals. We ate at home, indoors. We just got the food, we prepared it and sat around the table as a family and that's why it was such a big change for me to leave the boys, because we sat and ate our evening meals together and talked around the table.

JS: Do you think it still like that there or do you think it's more modernized now?

JB: I think it's more modernized now and I think both my boys have television teas you know just like anybody else does.

JS: Did you have a preconceived idea of what this country was like before you came here?

JB: No, not one. I can completely open-minded. I had to to accept it. It's the only way.

JS: Has it turned out, has your move here turned out the way you'd hoped it would?

JB: Financially we could not have done with the boys what we did without the finances here. Financially we went up tenfold. You've got to remember I came from a tiny house. It would fit in my garage. And including the land around it. I've got a house with a three car garage. My house with an upstairs and a bathroom and a yard would fit in my garage.

JS: Your mothers?

JB: My mum's house would fit in my garage now quite easily, so you can imagine what I came to and I had the terrible green eye when I first came. Absolutely, I have to be truthful, I had the terrible green eye.

JS: You were jealous.

JB: Yes. Envious so and it's a real nasty sin I know. When I came, I came in November at Christmas and I walked into the mall and saw that tree, my eyes were on my cheeks. I could not believe, everything was moving on this tree and I mean the mall was so big and everybody had shopping baskets and money just seem to be flowing like water. People had, the people that the company introduced us to at Christmas, they got these palatial homes. The size of their dining rooms were the size of the full size of my house in England. We lived, my son's bedroom was smaller than their closets, their walk-in closets.

So when I first came my apartment was like a mansion. When I first came here I felt that I was the queen bee when I was in my apartment because it was so big and spacious and I had this beautiful, well eventually I had a nice view, but the apartment itself was very nice. So when we moved into Elgin and in this house Andy's built me, in all the houses Andrew, I've ever lived in, I haven't quite understood, I haven't realized, but when I first moved into the house we live in now, I didn't know whether I was the maid or whether I was the queen. I couldn't work out who and I felt terribly guilty for owning it. I felt it was too much. I didn't deserve it and when I first came here I definitely said to Andrew "I don't deserve what has been given to me."

I felt too privileged and it spoiled me because now when I go back to England I feel claustrophobic. I feel that the world is closing in on me, terrible! Traffic, the roads are too narrow, the traffic goes too fast because of the narrowness of the roads, there's a lot of hustle and bustle. Financially we can't even afford to go to England at the moment because it costs us too much to get there and live because the dollar is going down the tubes at the moment here. Our dollar goes nowhere. Now Robert came here at Christmas

and he was shining like, great!, because his pound was going so far when he came here so there is a difference.

JS: Did this move turn out like you thought it would?

JB: No. I think I treated it like an adventure at first. And that's not a really nice way to say it but I did, I treated it like a holiday and an adventure.

JS: What was the best part about coming here?

JB: I can't honestly say I have a best part. I think, well actually yes I do. Finding the Lord to be honest. I don't know if you can use that but yes, finding the Lord, and finding myself. I've actually grown up since I've been here. I wasn't grown up when I was in England. I really wasn't grown up at all. I've grown up since I've been here. I had to make decisions that Andy's made me make that I wasn't making in England and I found it hard to think about me. Because up until I arrived here my children were my thought, my life was my boys, the house, housekeeping and keeping Andy happy and then when I came here that rug was taken from me, Andy wasn't in my life and I had no where to go and I had nothing, no destiny. I had nothing in my life and I had to find me and it's taken me all this time to be happy with me, in myself and to be a woman in my own right. I didn't feel a woman in my own right until this last four or five years.

JS: What was the hardest or most difficult thing?

JB: Leaving the boys.

JS: What do you miss most about England?

JB: I miss not being able to leave the house and go for a walk that I don't have to take a car for...

JS: You can't do that where you live?

JB: Well I can in Candlewick, but once you walk around the lake it's the same scene, whereas if, you know, we could walk quite a long way, I mean I could walk to Trenton, I could walk two or three or 4 miles, I don't suppose, I don't really know what the differences is. I think sense of humor I miss. And I miss being able to speak to an English person who knows what I'm saying and I can have, I can say something and they know it's a joke and they respond. Like when I met Sue we can talk together and I can say something, she laughs and I'll say "That's what I miss," I miss the interaction, because the Americans haven't got the same sense of humor. I watch your programs on the telly and I can't laugh at your programs. I'm sorry, they're not funny. Whereas you seem to be able to laugh at our comedy. I think that's the difference we haven't got the same sense of humor. Yours is very, very witty but level, it's got no depth to it. We've got more of a satirical humor and humor keeps the world go round, really. I can't think of anything

other than finances and Andrew's got on with this job. I can't think there's anything different really.

JS: Do you see yourself as English rather than American?

JB: Yes.

JS: Do you think you always will?

JB: Yes, I'm going to make sure I keep my English.

JS: But your way of thinking is it . . .

JB: Oh no, it's American now. My mother says I'm more American. When I speak she hears me and she'll say "That's an American slang" or "You're losing your punctuality" and losing . . . you know because when you're in England you speak a little differently than when you are here. You hear a different type of English I suppose. I'm not sure but yes, I am more American. I am more American because I like the spaciousness that you provide here. I like the, if I want, you see in England, at one time when I was there you couldn't go for a meal after six o'clock. Everything shuts, everything closes down, whereas now we're getting very Americanized so when I go back to England I can see some big malls opened [Trentham] Gardens has been turned into an absolute wonderful place for the rich and that's not far down the road from where my mom lives. So yes, England, now I've realized that the way they're going to get on is tourism. Tourism is getting England out of the doldrums because they're realizing that Americans, and Germans and French are going to England because they're more open now. We're not as closeted as we used to be.

JS: Do you look forward to becoming an American citizen?

JB: I think we're only doing it, we're doing it for the wrong reasons. We're doing it because we feel, we think that our pensions going to suffer if we don't. We have a few more anomalies once we become a citizen than we don't have now and it also changes our taxes and our financial, so I think we're only really doing it for, but we don't lose our British. Andy's half Irish and half Scottish and half English. His father was Scottish, his mother was Irish, yet he was born in England. I'm true English. But when we become citizens we keep all the same. We don't lose any of them. We thought we would but we don't. He's got an Irish passport, he's got an English passport and we'll have an American passport

JS: How about pensions, will you still get a pension from England?

JB: Well fortunately Andy stayed in the pension system in England too. He's got two jobs or two companies, the very first one he's still got a pension with them. Renishaw in England he's got a pension with them and he's also taken a 401(k) out here but that 401(k) if we are members, if we are American citizens, changes if we don't so it will benefit us

the amount of money he's going to get on his 401(k) if we are citizens. So that's the only reason, we're not doing it for patriotic reasons to be honest. We don't really feel like we need, we don't want to do it for patriotic reasons we're only doing it for that reason.

JS: You have no intentions of moving back to England?

JB: I think if grandchildren come on the scene it might change the subject but according to Neil and Caroline they don't want children and Robert hasn't even got a girlfriend. He's my eldest boy so if grandchildren came on maybe, or if Andy died, or see my mom's 88 and she's got all her marbles. She still runs her own home she does all the washing and ironing, she cooks and cleans.

JS: Is your father living?

JB: No, father died 15 years ago.

JS: How often do you get home to visit?

JB: Less and less. Andy hasn't been home for eight years and I haven't been home for five.

JS: So you think you'll spend the rest of your life here then? That's the plan?

JB: If Andy stays well and healthy and we have an old age together I think we will be here. If Andy dies and my mom is still living and maybe she needs me. I don't know, how can you, I haven't got a crystal ball. Or if Neil and Caroline have a child maybe they might want me there. I don't know. When you make a choice to leave your children even though they're 19 or 21 and you've been very very tightly connected in a family unit which we were, and you leave the nest it makes an impression on those children and those children don't view you as being in the full front of their lives anymore because you're not. You're not in their day to day life so they don't treat you the same. You are their mom and dad, but you're further away. The nest has been pulled apart so if you expect to come back into their lives because a grandchildren has been born you might find they're turning away. You weren't there when I needed you, don't come back here interfering now. So when you make that choice it's permanent. You can't put back the pieces when they've already been broken and that was, when you asked me what was the thing that hurt me most coming here and I said the children. I missed that connection. I miss that family unit. When you have Christmas and when you have Easter and when you have parties, birthday parties and the family, Thanksgiving everybody together as a family. That's when it hurts every time because I don't have a family here.

JS: How do you. . . Do you spend your holidays with friends?

JB: No. We're always together the two of us and that's it. And I miss that. I miss that connection with my family. And I've realized the older I'm getting the more it's painful, very painful.

JS: Maybe things will change.

JB: You just have to live and hope because I don't know what's in store for me or Andrew. You have to just keep staying healthy and well.

JS: One last question. How do you feel about the current debate in this country about immigration and immigrants legal or otherwise?

JB: I don't think they should be allowed to sneak over the border. I don't know how you're going to stop it, but I don't think they should be allowed to sneak over the border. They should come in like I come in, with a job or a person who's coming with a person with a job. And when they're here I still think they should be given all the same opportunities as everyone else, because if they are coming and they're coming with a job then they're going to contribute to the running of the country. But there is something said, if Mr. Bush or whoever's there, it doesn't matter if it's Bush, or whoever it's there, if he stops the immigrant population from coming in America would come to a sudden halt because they actually take up the slack of all the jobs that the American people won't do. So, and they actually are doing the menial jobs so that the rest of the Americans can get on so, you know.

JS: Are you speaking to illegal immigrants or all immigrants?

JB: No, well illegal, well no because illegal immigrants shouldn't be allowed to come over the border so I don't agree with that. But if you are legally here and like Andy and I came, he came with a job so that's okay. And I pay taxes. I don't pay taxes in England. We don't exist in England. We have an account, some money in a bank, but it's only for emergencies in case the boys need something to bail them out or if we go over we can use English money and we haven't had to take our money over because at the moment it's worthless anyway. The American dollar is worthless anyway so with that if you're coming over here and you've got all your ducks in a line you should be treated like any other person. But illegal, I don't think you can stop it to be honest. I think it's a foregone conclusion they're going to sneak over no matter what. I don't think you're ever going to stop it. No matter how many troops he puts out there. I mean if you take eastern and western Germany, when the wall came down the West did not want the East in. They really did not want the east in because the West, they had got a very nice high society, they were earning a lot more money, they had lovely homes and the East Germans had nothing and they really didn't have anything and they did not want them on the other side.

JS: It took a long time to work that out.

JB: Absolutely. They were devastated. So just that, and look at Israel. Look at what's going on in Israel. Israel's in a terrible state and Israel just don't want to give the Palestinians any room you know, they keep building houses. They've put, now they put a German wall up. Which the Germans pulled down. I mean, why erect something like that

across lands they don't even own? And they just willy-nilly put a wall up. Well that's not being true democracy that just dictatorship. I'm sorry.