Interview with Paul Findley

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Interviewer: Mark DePue

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DePue: Today is Tuesday, January 15, 2013. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Jacksonville, Illinois, specifically, at Illinois College, Whipple Hall. I'm with Congressman Paul Findley. Good morning, sir.

Findley: Good morning.

DePue: I've been looking forward to this interview. I've started to read your autobiography. You've lived a fascinating life. Today I want to ask you quite a bit to get your story about growing up here in Jacksonville and your military experiences during World War II, and maybe a little bit beyond that, as well. So, let's start at the beginning. Tell me when and where you were born.

Paul Findley (far left), with his siblings.

Findley: I was born June 23, 1921 in a bungalow that still exists, here

on Edgehill Road. I now live about three blocks away, so I haven't gone very far in this life.

DePue: Were you actually born in the home?

Findley: Yes. We had five children. I shouldn't have said we, but Joseph Stillwell Findley, my father, and Florence Nichols Findley, my mother, had five children. The eldest was William, who became a well-known expert on the properties of plastics. He was a lot older than I, by my standard, I would say, probably about eight years. And my eldest sister, Miriam, was two years younger than he. Two years [after] that, Ruth came on the scene. Then there was a gap of about four years, I believe, when I did. Then the youngest child still lives, the only sibling I have still alive, Barbara. I was six years old when she was born.

DePue: It sounds like your father would have been too old to serve during the First World War, then.

Findley: He did not serve. He had children by that time, two children, I believe. He was in the YMCA program. He had been the general secretary of the YMCA in Mankato, Minnesota, which I believe was his first assignment. He was general secretary there. It was, and still is, a sizable property. Then he heard about an opening here in Jacksonville. He thought that'd be a step up. He liked the idea of being closer to Princeton, where my mother's family lived.

DePue: Princeton, Illinois.

Findley: Yes, Bureau County. My father was from Indiana, I think, Brown County, Indiana.

DePue: What nationality, what ethnic background was your family's name?

Findley: Well, my mother loved genealogy. She had a passion for that. She insisted that our main blood was Scottish, not Irish, but there was a mixture. She traced the ancestry back several generations, found that an ancestor was a general in the Revolutionary War and, I think, was mentioned for vice president during his life. I hope I can bring back his name. I don't at the moment. But she and my father met at Geneva, Wisconsin, where they both were attending a YMCA conference. They had a little walk along the lake there. He popped the question, and she agreed.

She had had one year of college. It was then a girls' school, Wheaton College, known as a very conservative institution. I think she had art classes. She made some gold decorated china. I still have a sample of it. She loved art. She didn't do as much with it as she would have liked to have, but she saw to it that all of us had a dash of it.

My father was one of ten boys in this one family, two girls and ten boys. When he died, I believe there was only one brother still alive, but both sisters survived. They were both teachers. He had one year at Purdue University. I'm not sure why he went, but I have a carved wooden goblet that he made on a lathe, which I cherish very much. I'm not sure whether I've given it yet to a grandchild. If not, it's at home. I'm sure it isn't up here[1]. He obviously had an immediate interest in the YMCA. After one year at Purdue, he attended a training school in Chicago for Y secretaries and then had the assignment in Mankato. I think that was his first.

He was, at that time, a Methodist. My mother was Methodist, too. And curiously, when we came to Jacksonville, he was a Methodist YMCA secretary. But the State Street Presbyterian Church had a vacancy in the pastorate, and they persuaded him, as Y secretary—which wasn't too unusual for a Y secretary—to fill in as pastor of the church until they hired a regular minister. It went on for about four or five months, I believe, but in that time, the family got so accustomed to attending a Presbyterian Church, they just stayed. I became a member of the Presbyterian Church when I reached the right age, and so did my sisters.

DePue: It harkens back to the old Scottish roots that the family had.

Findley: It does. That's true, Calvinist. And I remain a Presbyterian.

DePue: You said your dad came to work in the YMCA here in Jacksonville?

Findley: Yes, and it turned out to be a bad experience. This was right after the war, World War I. The local Y had decided to sell the old building and to use their revenue as a starting point for a new building. Well, there was a two-year depression that followed World War I, and, during that time, the directors of the Y chose to meet current expenses out of the building fund. So, in a short time, the building fund was gone. My father lost interest in that and decided to try his hand at farming, which was another big mistake. (laughs)

DePue: Had his parents been farmers?

Findley: Yes, they were lifelong farmers, although my mother's father was also a bricklayer and plasterer. He moved to Princeton, the county seat, a good many years before he died, and he did some plastering. He also was sent, at an early age, to Oklahoma territory, where he built some cabins for Indians. One of my prized possessions is a pair of buffalo horns that are tied together very neatly, a souvenir of Oklahoma days.

DePue: But back to your father, and his hand at farming.

[1] The Findley oral history interviews were conducted in the Paul Findley Congressional Office Museum located in Whipple Hall on the Illinois College campus. Congressman Findley has donated many of his personal and professional artifacts to the museum.

Findley: It was a mess. He had never had experience running a farm, but he plunged right into it. The Depression was no help, of course, but it wasn't any help either to be managing the family farm, because, judging by comments I heard my mother make over the years, her parents, Augustus Nichols and his wife, frequently found fault with poor Pop and his trying to keep the farm afloat. Well, after two seasons, he was ready to go back to Jacksonville, which he did.

I have several early memories of the farm. My birth was in Jacksonville when he was Y secretary, but my earliest memory was the day that a sack of flour was placed on the kitchen table. I, without intending any harm, pulled the table away, and the flour spilled on the floor. I'm sure it was a catastrophe financially. Everything was then. The farm, I don't believe had electricity, but I remember that because I was guilty of causing a problem. I also have a faint memory of the day that they slaughtered pigs, hogs, on the lawn of the farmhouse, and just to have the impression of them loading ground up pork into a piece of intestine, which I thought was a terrible way to preserve food. So, those were the two glimpses.

Then I had a further glimpse. The night I remember, riding with my father in an open sedan, which I assume he owned. He was nailing up "for sale" signs. He decided to sell what property he had on the farm, pull up stakes and leave. I was there to witness the ordeal he had of nailing up signs to advertise the sale. I don't know whether the sale was a success or not, but it happened.

DePue: What did he do then, after he moved away from the farm?

Findley: He moved back to Jacksonville, which he liked. He enjoyed the town and accepted a job as a salesman for MetLife, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. There were two such salesmen in Jacksonville, I believe. It was already the leading insurance company, I believe. He spent every day and every Saturday, including the weekdays, driving from house-to-house to collect maybe twenty-five cents or fifty cents as the premium for the month from each of the holders of an insurance policy. That's the way they paid the premium. He had to collect it. He had a big fat book called the blue book, in which he entered the transactions. He kept the money until Saturday. I remember watching. My father and mother were working together at a roll-top desk in the entryway to our little bungalow on Edgehill. They were counting up his receipts, which he would then deposit that same day to Metropolitan Life.

DePue: Being a salesman, you think of a certain personality that goes along with it. It's somebody who has to deal with rejection a lot. Would you say your father was a natural salesman?

Findley: All I know is that he survived as a salesman and continued for several years, until Parkinson's struck him. He had a weakness for limousines. He couldn't afford a new one, but it seems he always had a used limousine that was either taking him around town or being repaired. It wound up in the shop quite a bit.

DePue: How else would you describe his personality, especially before he got the Parkinson's?

Findley: Well, he was always business. I'm sure he was a good parent. One of the happiest moments I had was the day he brought a suit of clothes home from Myers Brothers, which was in Jacksonville. It was a two-piece suit. Maybe it had a vest, too. But it was a jacket and a pair of knee-length trousers, and I thought that was terrific.

DePue: That was for you?

Findley: Yeah, it was for me. I wasn't even at the store when he picked it out, but I guess he knew what size to get. I was really touched that he would do that.

DePue: You said, "I'm sure he was a good father." That almost sounds like you didn't see him that much.

Findley: I didn't. Nobody did. He worked, it seemed to me, almost day and night. I imagine he did quite a few collections at night. It does seem almost pitiful that he would have the chore of picking up fifty cents—or at the most, $1—and make calls day and night for that purpose.

He was almost always driving a used Franklin sedan. I remember that he had two different Franklins. One was probably a model 1922 and the other model, maybe two years later. But they were nice cars. I remember they had pull-down seats in the back seat, and they had curtains in the windows of the back. It was kind of a fancy vehicle at one time. I later discovered what was probably Pop's car, in a barn in Roodhouse, Illinois. A man that had a fondness for old cars bought this car and had spent a lot of money fixing it up. He would take it around to parades, occasionally, but never drove it.

DePue: How did the Parkinson's affect him and affect the family?

Findley: One day, he came home—we lived on Park Street by then—and he showed me his hands. His fingers were stiff. They had been around the steering wheel all day, and it was obvious he had trouble, big trouble. It wasn't long before he retired, in order to qualify for a pension, which was $50 a month. That became the family's sole regular income.

DePue: Was the pension from Metropolitan Life?

Findley: Yes. It was a health policy he bought, which was fortuitous.

DePue: You can't imagine what the family's finances would have been, had he not made that decision?

Findley: That's right. Well, each of us became, to a great degree, self-supporting. I earned money when I was mowing lawns a lot. The reel type mowers were the only kind you had (laughs), and they were hard to keep sharp, so I had that. A big lawn would be seventy-five cents. The other average lawns would be fifty. It's a hard way to make money, but I could keep all the money I earned, no taxes. (both laugh)

DePue: Seventy-five cents in those days, though, in the late twenties, early thirties, would have been serious money. How long would it take you to mow a big lawn?

Findley: I'll just guess it'd take two and a half hours.

DePue: That's quite a bit of time.

Findley: I did quite a bit of that. One day, a lady named Miss Prince—never married—lived on Grove Street, near our house. She called me up. She wanted me to deliver a letter across town, which I did. She paid me ten cents for the delivery. She struck me as being an oddity. The name, Prince, was well established because of David Prince, whose name was on the junior high school at that time. It was a separate building in back of what, for many years, was the high school on West State. They had access to the David Prince Building on second story tunnels that we could use.

DePue: How about your mother? You haven't talked about her much.

Findley: Oh, well she was…she worked. I'm not sure just how soon she did, but I dare say—

DePue: You mean after the Parkinson's?

Findley: That was after Parkinson's struck. Up to that point, I think she was full-time mother and homemaker and a good one. She was the leader of the family. She had to be, had no choice, but she did a terrific job. She led by example. There must have been other occasions, but I remember vividly one time I was scolded—never whipped, (laughs) no bodily attack—but she was very upset with me, because I had promised to come home from school right after school and not tarry to play football or whatever was up. Instead, I came in the usual hour, rather late, pretty close to suppertime. She had warned me to come home early so I could get ready to play in the band, which was giving a concert that night. I remember vividly, she said, "Well, I should make you stay out of the concert tonight as punishment, but Mr. [Paul] Van Badegraven, the director, I'm sure, would miss your trombone," which I played (laughs). And she said, "So, I won't do that, but always listen to me, and do what I tell you from this day on."

Oh, I have another. I'm not sure what I put in the book,[2] but one day, Mom asked me to go to the grocery store right at the end of Edgehill. I think she probably gave me fifty cents, or maybe it was a dollar, and asked me to get two or three items, which I did. I brought the change home, and she said, "Well, you could've bought yourself some candy with the change," which astounded me. I hadn't had any hint that I was entitled to any change (both laugh). I said, "Well, I'd like to go back and do that." She said, "No, you're home. Just stay here." (laughs)

DePue: After your father got the Parkinson's, what kind of work did she do?

Findley: She did some laundry work. I know that she took care of the shirts for a doctor that lived nearby. She always had a garden, even on Park Street. On Edgehill, she had a full lot next to our home that was a vegetable garden that she took care of every year, but that was before Pop got Parkinson's. But the jobs: I know she had as long as she wanted them. She was manager of the high school cafeteria, and that was nice, because we could all eat there. I had a job as cashier, I believe, most of the time, and my pay was lunch. I remember that she would get quantities of surplus food and to her amazement…Let's see, what's the nut that makes terrific pie?

DePue: Pecans?

Findley: Pecan. She'd get big cartons full of pecan nuts, beautiful. They were surplus. The government program for pecans was established, part of the south, you know. That's the way they got rid of supplies, was through cafeterias. [The high school] had a candy counter, as a part of the cafeteria, which was open during the noon hour. But also, if a faculty member wanted to get a candy bar, welcome to come in. [My mother] told me an amusing happening (laughs). One day, there were several faculty members, and she offered each of them a candy bar, at her expense. All but one took the candy bar, and that one said, "I'd rather have the nickel," so she gave it to him. Isn't that something? (both laugh) He was a high school teacher.

DePue: I would imagine her finances were such that they should have been giving her the nickel.

Findley: That's right. Her first salary was $15 a week. That would be $3 a day to put on a full food program for the kids, $3.

DePue: I would think after that, by the time she got home, she wasn't ready to do much cooking or cleaning, but didn't have much choice.

Findley: She did it anyway, although I'm sure she got the girls to do more than I was aware of.

[2] Congressman Findley is referring to his memoir, *Speaking Out*.

DePue: You mean your sisters?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: How much did she have to do with your father?

Findley: Well, by then, he couldn't get out by himself at all. He was able to kind of stumble around inside the house, but never go outside by himself. I didn't pay any attention to him, to my great regret. I just didn't. Mom was the breadwinner, the mother, the inspiration for all of us, and she got us all to go to church every Sunday.

DePue: How else would you describe her personality?

Findley: She had a good sense of humor; it didn't bubble up too often, but it was there. We weren't afraid of her, but we recognized that she was the authority. She was the law, not Pop. Pop very soon had difficulty saying anything. Words came hard. By the time I was a sophomore in college, my mother's parents were both deceased. She had the opportunity to receive, as part of the estate, the family home in Princeton, which had been a very nice, big, fine home at one time, but it was very much rundown. But she and Pop moved up to that location, and I'm sure that she had inherited some money that helped. But she was such a frugal person that, when she died at a very, very advanced age, hundred and six, but her last six years, she was in a retirement home and couldn't see anything or hardly say anything.

But Mom took full care of my father; never a nurse in the home that I know of. So, she took care of him through the night, as well as when she was in the house daytime. She would get him dressed in the morning, and he would be on his own alone during much of the day, although my sister, Barbara, younger than I [was there] when the family lived at 806 West College Avenue here in Jacksonville, he could still help wash the dishes. That was about the only thing he could do. Barbara told me that she and he became good friends, and they would sit together and talk, which is something I never did with my father, to my regret. They would sit on the porch, maybe, and have a can of pork and beans together, as lunch, while she was home from school.

Mom stayed with the cafeteria work during the school year. In the summer she managed the Prairie Farms Ice Cream Shop, which was located in a building that came down and became the south lawn of the public library, just a few years ago. The Prairie Farms had a small building that they used for various purposes, but they also had, as a part of it, a store where people could come in, get a milkshake, buy ice cream cones, things like that.

DePue: Did that mean you could get a discount for ice cream in the summertime?

Findley: I probably got a free one, I'm not sure; although, this reminds me of Pop's earlier days. Sunday was a day when the family was all together, the only time, except for Saturday night, and that was never sure. But Pop would take us for a ride, maybe out in the country. It was a thrilling time. And then, before the episode was over, we stopped in Merrigan's. He went inside; we stayed in the car. He went inside and got us each an ice cream cone. That was before he became an invalid. He was still driving.

DePue: Who would you say you took after more, your mother or your father?

Findley: I never reached the pinnacle that she held all her life, but I guess all of us tried to emulate her where we could. I was always interested in sports. My brother never was. The girls weren't. So, I was playing baseball at a very early age. In fact, while we were still living on Edgehill Road—which would probably take me into junior high years—I remember at dusk one night, I didn't see the oncoming baseball, and it hit me in the forehead and knocked me unconscious for a while. And then I came out of it.

I remember another time that I stepped on a rusty nail, and it went deep into my heel. Mom pulled it out, dressed the wound and didn't see a doctor, just used iodine, as I recall. And once, I was riding on the handlebars of a bicycle ridden by my brother. That's one of the few times we were together, I think. I think I caught my heel in the spokes of the front wheel and that threw me to the paving. Once again, I was unconscious for a while. Maybe that's what threw me off for a lifetime, led me into politics.

DePue: Since you did end up in politics later in your life, I'm curious whether or not politics was ever a topic of discussion around the dinner table or at home.

Findley: I can't ever remember it ever being that, although my parents were born and reared Republicans. They voted that way, but I can't remember them ever talking about public issues.

DePue: Now, this would have been during the FDR years, at least '32 on.

Findley: That's right. That's right. By then, my father was pretty much an invalid. He was able to shuffle around, but that's all. But I was interested in Herbert Hoover and FDR, and I became a Republican at a very tender age. My first campaign activity was the presidential bid of Alf Landon of Kansas. It was a colorful campaign, and I had hopes that he would beat FDR, but he, of course, carried Maine and Vermont, I think. (laughs)

DePue: Well, according to my calculations, he ran in '36.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: You would have been fifteen years old at the time.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: That's earlier than most people get interested in politics. What was it about Alf Landon—or what was it about FDR—that caused you to be an Alf Landon guy?

Findley: I listened to his fireside chats.

DePue: You're talking about FDR, now.

Findley: Yes, I was very conservative in my outlook. I had a used mimeograph. I had a used typewriter that I bought, and that put me in the publishing business. I earned some money by printing programs for recitals or band concerts or the church bulletins. I can't remember who was the…Oh, Victor Shepherd was then the Superintendent of Schools, and he asked me to mimeograph copies of his master's degree. Now it puzzles me that he was Superintendent of Schools with only a master's degree, but he was. It may have been that he was not a unit superintendent, but just a superintendent with limited authority over one-room schools. We had a lot of them. But that was my biggest publication job. My sister, Barbara, who liked to follow me around, helped me put it together. It's kind of a curiosity. Victor Shepherd violated the rules of his profession by marrying a very young high school girl. My wife, an avid bridge player, years later played bridge with this wife of Victor H. Shepherd. I forget her first name, but she lived on the corner of Edgehill Road. She was quite young.

DePue: But apparently his career didn't suffer too much for doing that?

Findley: That's right. I'm not sure whether the disclosure came before or after he got the job. (laughs)

DePue: Tell me a little bit more about the schools that you attended. Let's start with grade and junior high years. Were they public schools in town?

Findley: Yes. I attended only public schools. I attended two different grade schools, because, one day in Washington School, a fire started in the attic, and it burned to the ground. In the wake of that tragedy—nobody was hurt, shouldn't call it a tragedy—they passed a bond issue in 1934, I believe, which would be almost unheard of that anybody got approval of a bond issue, but they did in Jacksonville.

Paul Findley's first grade photo.

DePue: In the depths of the Depression

Findley: They built four brand new elementary schools

DePue: You have a wonderful story in the book about

that experience of that school burning.

Findley: Yeah. (laughs) Pop took me in the building while it was burning. I went up to the classroom on the second floor. We cleaned out my desk and left, stayed on the lawn, watching it burn up. (laughs)

DePue: What do you supposed possessed him? Was he trying to teach you a lesson, or he was worried about the expense?

Findley: I guess. (laughs)

DePue: Were other parents taking their kids in?

Findley: Not that I know of. (laughs)

DePue: Well, that says quite a bit about your father, I think.

Findley: Frugal was a word that had to be used toward him, and mother, too. I never felt I was frugal. I was able to buy enough, change myself to buy a new pair of shoes or a sweater or a shirt or whatever.

DePue: The money you were making on your own, was that your money, or was it going to the family kitty?

Findley: Oh, yeah. No, my parents, to their credit, didn't try to tap my earnings. (laughs) Maybe they should have, but they didn't. Whatever I earned, I could spend.

DePue: Tell me a little bit about your high school years.

Findley: In David Prince Junior High, it's hard to believe that I was a center on the basketball team, because I was only five-eight-and-a-half, but I had the center job. That was my only day of stardom in sports. I didn't make the grade in high school, didn't bother to try hard. I didn't try hard at all in college, although I played tennis and got a letter for that. Junior high was a good experience.

We had a lady named Hester C. Burbridge. She was a maiden lady, as many teachers of that era were. She set a good example, and she emphasized citizenship. My scrapbooks have some samples of citizenship certificates I got. Almost everybody got them, but that meant they were behaving. She was a good leader. I took part in baseball, basketball and track. We had a junior high track, a little bit, so I took part there and won a few ribbons, but I wasn't any star at all. I just loved sports. I catch; I was the catcher on my baseball team.

DePue: You must have taken up the trombone sometime in here, as well.

Findley: I did. I was ten years old. That was 1931. By then, I believe we lived on Park Street. I don't know how I acquired a battered, used trombone. It was loaned to me; it wasn't purchased. But I got it, took it to bed with me the first night. (laughs) I thought I had arrived, to have a trombone.

DePue: So, this wasn't forced on you by any means, it sounds like.

Findley: No. All of us took part in music. I guess partly because we were expected to. But the schools had good music programs, and I enjoyed the chorus, enjoyed being in *HMS Pinafore,* when I was in high school.

Now getting back to grade school. At that time, the YMCA had a program at all schools. Even though they had nothing but a single, very small apartment as their office, they had something going on all the time. Someplace, I've got a band to put around my left arm showing that I was on the gray-Y baseball team. So, in grade school, elementary school, everybody had a chance to be on the YMCA team. The Y had semi-religious programs for all the students that took part. High Y was the term for high school. Tri Y might have been the term for junior high. I'm not sure. But I mimeographed the bulletins about the YMCA grade school and the high school activities. I did a little publicity, without charge, for the YMCA activity.

In high school I was busy trying to make money, and I did, along with being a student. Why I got permission, I do not know, but the principal said I could sell chewing gum to the students during the day. I sold a lot of chewing gum.

DePue: Did you approach the principal about this?

Findley: Yes, I did, to see if it was okay.

DePue: Well, you were something of a—you might object to the term—but something of a hustler then, when you're hustling to get things.

Findley: That's right. That's right. I also got permission to print programs for football games. I don't think they have programs anymore, but I sold ads to appear in them. Then, I sold the mimeographed product and picked up a little money there. So, I was an entrepreneur at an early age. This happened, I'm sure, beginning in junior high.

DePue: Where did you attend high school?

Findley: Jacksonville High School, which was the same property, just next door.

DePue: So, it was only one high school in town at the time?

Findley: Yes, yes. Routt High School for Catholics. But in my boyhood, there seemed to be a wall between Catholics and Protestants. I think my parents may have

encouraged that separation. I'm not sure, but I never went in a Catholic church until I was out of high school.

DePue: Were the Catholics in Jacksonville primarily German Catholics?

Findley: No, I think mainly Irish. Now there's a Father Formaz, who was a…sort of a gloomy figure to me. I don't think he promoted any interfaith relations.

DePue: You had your own little printing publication firm. Were you also involved with the school newspaper?

Findley: I was. I'm not sure whether I was ever on the regular editorial staff, but I contributed to it, wrote articles. I once took to task the annual—I'm having trouble with words—the emphasis on darky humor.

DePue: Minstrels?

Findley: Minstrel shows, yes. I didn't take part in the minstrel shows, but I criticized them, because they demeaned blacks. That was pretty courageous, back in that era.

DePue: How many blacks were in Jacksonville at the time?

Findley: It was never a major part of the population. I would say, maybe five hundred.

DePue: So, there were some African American students you went to school with.

Findley: Oh, sure. Yes. I shared a desk with a black girl in first grade. It didn't strike me as strange that we had blacks. I accepted them.

DePue: Were you involved in any school elections?

Findley: Oh, yes. I never passed on an election. (laughs) I was president of the school sophomore class, think that's about the time that I criticized the minstrel. I was fifteen. Would that be right? I guess. That's probably right.

DePue: That would have been about the same time as the Alf Landon election.

Findley: That's right. Well, getting back to the minstrel show, my criticism of what I called gutter filth—how about that (laughs)—in a letter to the student newspaper, caused quite an outcry. One of my critics said, "Well, the time will come when you'll need our help. I can see you getting into politics, and you better be careful about losing friends over something like this." I kept that letter. It's in my scrapbook someplace. It was unsigned. The author said that he was speaking for several faculty members, who took part in the minstrel shows as well as students. But I was just criticizing it on my own. I didn't pretend to be speaking for a big audience. I just thought it was improper to demean the race.

DePue: Your comment strikes me that at least some of your classmates thought that you had political aspirations, even at that tender age.

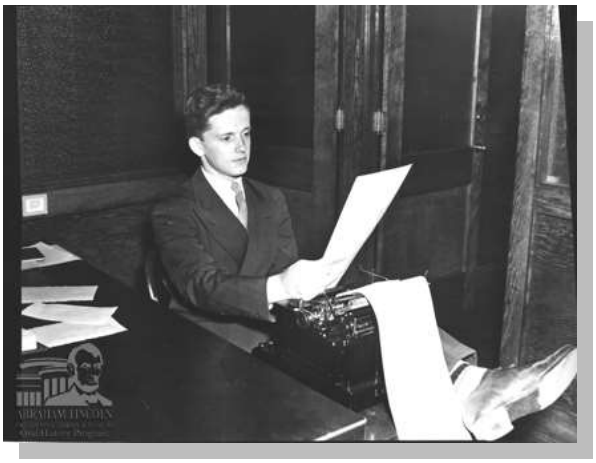
Findley: Oh, I got elected president of the sophomore class, and I'm not sure just how it happened. I can't say that I planted the idea. In the early stage, there was only one person running against me, a good friend. And I persuaded, I think, another good friend to run, so we had a three-way contest. I didn't get a majority of the vote. (laughs) I just got a majority of the vote cast for individuals.

DePue: Did you have any thoughts at the time about, "Hey, politics might be something I want to go into in the future?"

Findley: Well, I began writing for the *Journal-Courier* when I was early in high school.

DePue: Is this the local paper, then?

Findley: Yes. It still exists. I really enjoyed seeing my name and some copy I'd written in print. I wrote *JHS News Notes*. That was the caption. I'm not sure how many…how often I did that, but it was fairly steady. Then I began to get little, minor assignments to cover a sports event that nobody else wanted to cover. This put me in the newsroom. This was back when hot type was used—linotypes—and melted lead was used in forming the casing that was put on the cylinders to put on the press. I got a lot of printer's ink in my veins, and it stayed. (laughs)



Paul Findley in the newsroom at the Jacksonville Journal Courier, 1939.

DePue: What did you think you wanted to do, once you got out of high school, then?

Findley: I wasn't sure at all. In fact, I wasn't sure when I graduated from college. But I did love journalism. I thought that was a noble profession, not a place to make money, but a place to serve an important role. I was tending towards newspaper work, at that time.

DePue: What were your favorite courses or subjects in high school?

Findley: I took part in debate, but, as I recall, I wasn't any big winner, but I was active in it. I liked history. There was a man whose family owned the Cardinal Inn

on West State Street, that was once a residential hotel. He was a history teacher that I really enjoyed. I enjoyed economics. We had a course in economics, and there was a good teacher of that course. But I liked all my courses. I had Latin for two years and then French for two years. Then, in college, I took Spanish for two years.

DePue: How good a student were you?

Findley: I'm not sure that I ever got clear to the top, but I was up towards the top all the time; got good grades.

DePue: Given your family circumstances, was there ever any thought that you or your other siblings would not finish high school and go to work?

Findley: No, no. There was never the slightest doubt that we would all go through college. That was absolutely a certainty. It was just never talked about.

DePue: Was that coming from both parents?

Findley: That was because of my mother. I'm sure her husband was also chiming in, but she geared everything in that direction.

DePue: That's quite a stretch, given the financial circumstances of the family.

Findley: Well, many were having financial trouble. It wasn't uncommon. I think, the majority were having a tight time.

DePue: I think you graduated in 1939 from high school. Is that correct?

Findley: That's right.

DePue: You said you were in the pressroom quite a bit. Were you paying attention to what was going on in Europe and in Asia during those years leading up to your graduation?

Findley: I remember reading the *Chicago Daily News* a lot. I imagine this started in high school, because the *Daily News* would be around the newsroom of the *Journal-Courier*. It was an outstanding paper. It had a terrific foreign news service. You probably don't remember it, but it existed. It was really sort of like the *PD* [*Post Dispatch*] in St. Louis and the *New York Times*. It was in that category.

One of my close friends in high school that I dealt with quite a bit, because he was a full-time employee of the *Journal-Courier,* was Carl Erland Erickson. He was night editor. That is, he took care of the *Journal-Courier* night edition…no, the morning edition. He worked at night. I did most of my work at night, so I was right in the room with him. We became close friends, and

we talked about everything, a lot of politics, Chicago Cubs. I became a Cubs fan in junior high. (both laugh)

DePue: Well, isn't this St. Louis Cardinal fan at the time?

Findley: Well, that's Missouri. This was Illinois. (laughs) There are a lot of Cub fans still in Jacksonville, but they're the minority.

DePue: Another story that I recall from the book is you had a strong view about FDR and what historians call the court-packing event.

Findley: Yes. I talked to him pretty severely for trying to pack the court. I thought it was an unconstitutional initiative. Did he try to do that by executive order? I can't remember.

DePue: I think so.

Findley: Or did he propose at Congress? I don't think he—

DePue: I know there's a huge political debate.

Findley: He was going to do it on his own, and he became pretty much a dictator, really. Congress was heavily Democratic, all through his years. I don't remember any years in which the Republican Party seriously challenged him on anything.

DePue: I know that the frustration that the president had with the Supreme Court was it had declared a couple of his major initiatives as being unconstitutional.

Findley: Yes, that's right. With my mimeograph and typewriter I could be a publisher, and I was. For several years, I came up with ridiculous statements sometimes (laughs). One of the headlines was *Evidences of Communism in Jacksonville*. How's that? (both laugh)

DePue: That was probably a surprise to the Jacksonville citizens.

Findley: (laughs) It pleased the local private utility. I think they asked for a few extra copies. (both laugh) But I would print maybe fifteen or twenty and just hand them out to anybody that wanted to read it.

DePue: What were you charging for these?

Findley: Nothing.

DePue: Just as long as your name's out there, or your opinion's out there, huh?

Findley: Yeah, that's right. That's right. In fact, at one point—I think I was probably a freshman in high school—I had a little hand-operated printing press, loose type in it, would pull the handle, had a disk that took care of the ink.

A neighbor of mine, Baird Oxtoby—who was the son of a professor at Illinois College, who later was my teacher—Baird and I decided to found a Latin American expedition. We were determined to go to Ecuador. (both laugh.) Can you imagine this? (laughs) We got literature about Ecuador from the embassies, and then a few other countries down in Latin America, and we were going to have an expedition. We wanted to explore the head shrinking activities of South America. (both laugh) I'm sure it never happened, but I read about it, and it was fascinating.

So, Baird and I even printed up envelopes and letterheads and made our requests for literature on letterheads like that, the Latin American Expedition, Jacksonville, Illinois. (both laugh)

DePue: Well Congressman, it sounds like you didn't lack for either imagination or gumption back in those days.

Findley: That's right. (laughs)

DePue: So, what do you do with all that pent up energy then, when you're looking to find a college? Where did you look?

Findley: I wrote to Oxford in England. (DePue laughs) They sent me a nice letter, said you aren't eligible. I think I wrote to Harvard and got turned down there. But the turndowns didn't bother me at all. When I was in high school, I had a lot of assignments to cover lectures that occurred here in Jacksonville. They were authors of books mostly.

DePue: Coming to the local colleges, perhaps?

Findley: And I also covered political meetings. That's where the bug really bit me, Democrat, as well as Republican. I was covering them for the paper. I'm not exactly sure what year all that began, probably my senior in high school. And then, I did a lot of that while I was in college, for pay.

DePue: You didn't start at college here in town, did you?

Findley: Well, I actually did. I got an offer, a very nice offer, as a Rector Scholar at the great university in southern Indiana, DePauw University. I went there, expecting to go there. I found a woman, who had given me a room I could work off, and I was planning to go to DePauw.

I came back home, and I realized that it would be cheaper and easier to go to Illinois College. I didn't have any money, except for what I had earned, so it would have been a struggle to be at DePauw, more so than here; because I had established good will at the *Journal-Courier*. I could expect to earn some money there. In fact, my earnings from *Journal-Courier* were the single most important income that I had. But when I got back, I decided to go to IC, and that was a disappointment to my mother. She was very disappointed. She

didn't think Illinois College was nearly as good as DePauw. It probably wasn't, but that's where I chose to go, and she didn't fight it. I've been glad about it, because Illinois College has been a part of my life, a fascinating part, all through the years. I was on the board of trustees for thirty years.

DePue: I know you also took a trip to Washington, D.C. I think that might even have been before you graduated from high school.

Findley: That's right. Now, that was not for winning an editorial contest. My first trip, I hitchhiked, I believe. Back in that day, that was commonplace. Now my mother didn't like it, but she didn't fight it, either. I hitchhiked quite a bit around the Midwest.

DePue: But why Washington, D.C., of all places? Was that the political bug that you had?

Findley: That was the political bug. I stayed overnight with a family that had relocated from Edgehill in Jacksonville to Arlington, Virginia. The parent, the father, Frank Vannier, had worked at Eli Bridge Company, but he got an attractive offer working for the federal government in the Bureau of Labor, I believe. So, I stayed overnight with them for a couple of nights, just on my own, and just wandered around. I picked up a card, so I could get into the senate gallery and saw Borah of Idaho, the Lion of Idaho.

DePue: Was it Frank Borah?

Findley: I think it was Frank.[3] He was one of the veteran senators. They called him the Lion of Idaho. And I saw…Who was the man in Wisconsin that originated the primary system?

DePue: It wouldn't have been LaFollette, would it?

Findley: Yeah, I saw the young Robert LaFollette, with a nice, neat bowtie, sitting at the desk in the Senate. Those are memories of that trip. I think I hitched a ride back to Jacksonville. I was still in high school, I believe.

DePue: Let's get more to your college years, then. You've talked a little bit about how you managed to finance your way through college. Did you have any kind of a scholarship, as well?

Findley: Yes, I did. I always had a scholarship for…oh, maybe it was a hundred and $50 a year. That just covered fees, I believe. Believe it or not, I believe that sum **did** cover fees. I didn't buy any new books. They had a book store, which was the Center for Rotating Books. A student would buy a book, sell it back to the bookstore, and they would resell it to the next customer. So, buying

[3] William Edgar Borah, known as the "Lion of Idaho," was a Republican senator from 1907 to 1940.

books was not the ordeal that it is these days. I was able to continue working for the *Journal-Courier,* and that was pretty steady. I put in quite a few hours, so I didn't have time for a lot of social life, but I did have some. (laughs)

DePue: Does that mean you were dating, once you got to college, a little bit? (both laugh)

Findley: That's right. Believe it or not, despite the Depression, most of us had a tuxedo. I bought one. I think it didn't cost much more than ten bucks, but I bought one.

DePue: Well, that means you can go to the dances.

Findley: That's right. And they had dances, formal dances—with the girls all dressed up and the guys in tuxes—at Phi Alpha. That was normal for Phi Alpha back then. (laughs)

DePue: That's a local fraternity?

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Were you a member of Phi Alpha then?

Findley: Oh, yes. It's a literary society. It's not a fraternity. It's not a live-in thing, at all. This college is unique for having a very active set of literary societies, women, as well as men. I think it's one of the good features of Illinois College.

DePue: Was Illinois College a co-ed college at the time?

Findley: Yes, when I was there, yes.

DePue: The other college in town here was…

Findley: It was just a woman's college then.

DePue: MacMurray?

Findley: We did most of our dating down there.

DePue: Why didn't you date the girls that were going to Illinois College?

Findley: I don't know. I guess because I saw them in the daytime. (both laugh)

DePue: Well, that's not very kind.

Findley: It wasn't. I didn't mean it that way.

DePue: What was your major in college?

Findley: History, a double major in history and political science.

DePue: And you kind of intimated before, you didn't really know what you wanted to do with it.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: But it sounds to me like you're leaning seriously towards journalism, though.

Findley: And I thought about law. In fact, I know that, had I gone to law school, it would have been an asset to me as a journalist. I talked to an editor of the *Evening Star* in Washington on one of my trips out there, after the war. He said, "You ought to go back; get a law degree. Even if you're going to go into journalism, it'll be an asset for you."

DePue: It sounds like the people you were working with, maybe a couple of your mentors that were in journalism, were definitely seeing you going that direction?

Findley: Yes, that had to be the case because, out of the blue, after I had come back from the war, about a year later, one of them, who was also a politician, Richard Yates Rowe, Sr., who was state treasurer at the time—in the lineage of two men named Richard Yates, both governors of Illinois.[4] One was a Civil War governor, and both of them are pictured in the hallway out here. By the way, those photos—maybe you know this—those are the likenesses of the former students of Illinois College that went to Congress, about twenty of them.

DePue: Congress or the state legislature or both?

Findley: Congress, Congress.

DePue: Strictly Congress. That's quite an accomplishment.

Findley: It is, I think. I think it is.

DePue: For a school that your mother didn't think was good enough for you. (both laugh) I assume you kept involved with a lot of other extracurricular activities in college, as well?

.Findley: Tennis was the only sport I took part in. The college was not full of various clubs at that time. Phi Alpha was all I could manage, I'm sure, and I know I missed a lot of the meetings at Phi Alpha. One of my memories is a note from

[4] Richard Yates Rowe, Sr. (1889-1973) was the great nephew of Governor Richard Yates, Sr. and nephew of Governor Richard Yates, Jr. He served as Illinois Secretary of State 1944-1945 and Illinois State Treasurer 1945-1947. He ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor in 1948 and lost in the Republican gubernatorial primary in 1952. See http://www.ourcampaigns.com.

my yearbook, from a Phi member who said he hoped that I'd be able to attend Phi meetings more often in the future. So, I was not always there.

DePue: But there's a picture in the book here of you directing the Illinois College band.

Findley: Well, I was a federal employee.

DePue: A federal employee?

Findley: (laughs) They had a federal youth administration, one of the alphabetic…

DePue: Alphabet soup programs that FDR had?

Findley: …for students. I think I got $125 for a year, directing the Illinois College band. So, I was a federal employee during that time. (both laugh)

DePue: What attributes did you have that made you perfect for the job of directing the band?

Findley: Well, I think I directed the band while I was a federal employee, directing the band. (laughs) I had a pretty good band. We didn't work anybody too hard, but I remember we played long for a daytime concert, in what was then the chapel building. We had an evening concert when the picture was taken on the steps of the library, which still exists.

DePue: It looks like you're wearing a very smart looking pair of white trousers here, as you're directing.

Findley: That's right. I'm sure I had paid for them. And I had a jacket that was maybe the remnant of a band uniform. We didn't worry about uniforms.

DePue: Were you also involved with some school politics again? Did you run for class office or anything like that?

Findley: No, I don't believe I did. I worked, it seemed, almost a full, 40-hour, week at the *Journal-Courier,* plus the college. I was off campus most of the time. I lived off campus all the way through. The first two years, I lived at home.

DePue: Then, did you rent a room after your parents moved to Princeton?

Findley: Yes, just a room from a family named Gilchrest, which is right across the street from where we used to live at 806. The Gilchrest family rented out two bedrooms upstairs, very small rooms. And Wilbur Moore became a close friend. He was in Phi Alpha, and we had a lot of fun together. He had one room. I had the other. We didn't share. We didn't room together. We each had a private room. And we'd occasionally get out. He played the saxophone, and

I played the trombone, so we would get a girl, and ring her on the phone and serenade her with a little music. (both laugh)

DePue: What were the songs you were serenading them with? Do you remember?

Findley: They were favorites, "Oh, tell me why the sky is blue, then I will tell you why I love you." That was a few of the phrases.

DePue: So, some of the ballads of the day?

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: I wonder also, you started school, I would assume, September timeframe in 1939. That's the timeframe the Germans invaded Poland. So, World War II has started in Europe. It's already going on in Asia at that time. We'll talk about Pearl Harbor here in a bit, but, between those two events, what was your view about all of this and what the United States was doing?

Findley: I was against going to war. I thought, just let the British take care of their own problems over there. I wrote a few editorials to that effect. I doubt that they pleased Joe Patterson Smith, the very well-known, blind history professor, one of my teachers. He once told me that my mind was like a harness that needed oiling. I squeaked. (both laugh)

DePue: So, even after France and the Low Countries fell to the Nazis in 1940, and England was standing all by itself, you still felt that we needed to stay out of the war?

Findley: I'm not sure just how long. I think I had my doubts, until Pearl Harbor.

DePue: Let's talk about that day. What do you remember about that day, December seventh?

Findley: Vivid memory. I was in the upstairs, rented room of the Gilchrest house, coming down the stairs, when I heard Roosevelt's voice on the radio announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor. Sunday. I was getting ready to go to church.

DePue: How did that change things for you?

Findley: It changed from night to day. I knew we had to be entered. We were under attack. We had to go after the Japanese. They were, of course, allied with the Nazis.

DePue: Did you have any doubts, after that that we had to go to war with Germany, as well?

Findley: No, no doubts. It really cleared my thinking, if I could call it thinking. (laughs)

DePue: So, according to Professor Smith, you got your harness oiled after that?

Findley: Yep, I guess. One day, he asked our history class to identify George Catlett Marshall. Not a soul raised their hand. None of us ever heard of George Marshall. And Smith said, "Well, you'll be learning lots about him in the future." (laughs)

Joe Pat Smith was a veteran of World War I. He was blinded, I think, when he was aboard ship; some explosion blinded him totally. But despite that handicap, he earned his baccalaureate degree and all the way through Ph.D., thanks to mentoring by his wife, reading everything to him. He was a brilliant guy. In fact, I know he had dreams of being a member of Congress in the south, and he, I believe, turned down a suggestion by one of the local Democrats that he run. He was not impressed with me as a candidate for Congress. I ran against a guy named Carrott in Quincy. (laughs) And Joe Pat, according to some intelligence I received, described the choice for Congress as being, between a Neanderthal, me, and a vegetable, Carrott. (both laugh) I think there was a tinge of jealousy, because I think he dreamed of being in Congress someday, but it didn't come his way.

DePue: I know you made some important decisions, shortly after Pearl Harbor, in respect to your own military involvement. What were your decisions?

Findley: The other members of the Phi Alpha debate team…Oh, that was one of my activities. I was always on the debate team for Phi Alpha.

DePue: Do you remember the subjects that they were debating at the time?

Findley: At my suggestion, they debated the Federal Union for the Atlantic Federation Proposition that Streit was advancing. I know that we lost it. Streit lost, too.[5] Let's see now…

DePue: Your own future with the military.

Findley: Well, I knew that I would be drafted if I didn't enlist. I was told that, if I would enlist in the Navy Reserve, I would not be called up until next February. This was summertime, or spring.

DePue: So, the spring of '42.

Findley: Yeah, spring of '42. I enrolled in the University of Chicago Law School and took enough courses, passed enough, to graduate the following January, just

[5] Clarence Streit (1896-1986) was a leading proponent of an Atlantic Union.

ahead of the time that I would be called up. So, all three of us did the same thing the same day.

DePue: Why wouldn't you have stayed at Illinois College? Couldn't you have also done that from Illinois College?

Findley: Well, there was no summer program at all, hadn't been for years.

DePue: So, did you just take courses during the summer at the University of Chicago Law School?

Findley: Yes, just the summer. I thought I might go back and get a law degree after service, but I wasn't sure. When I did leave the war, I had a job offer from Clarence Streit, the author, to be assistant editor of a new magazine he was launching, called *Freedom & Union*, a monthly. I enrolled in the George Washington University School of Law in D.C., but I never attended the class. I simply didn't take part. I could have done that under the G.I. Bill, but I didn't.

DePue: I definitely want to get to more of the story about Clarence Streit, because he obviously was influential in your career, but let's go back to the decision then. You're now in the Navy Reserve, and my understanding: Did you volunteer? Did you want to be an aviator, a pilot?

Findley: Well, I thought it'd be kind of neat. (both laugh) That was actually my attitude. When the time came, I decided to opt out for a variety of reasons. They kept increasing the flight prep schooling. They increased it twice while I was in, and then the backup of candidates for pilot license was growing so fast at the other end. You won't believe this, but I was afraid the war would be over before I got overseas. I truly felt that way.

DePue: I'm sure your mother was paying attention, reading about the war in the newspaper and thinking, He wants to be a Navy pilot; that's a pretty dangerous business. (both laugh)What was she telling you?

Findley: She never mentioned it.

DePue: Didn't she? Did you have any of your other siblings in the military?

Findley: No.

DePue: Your older brother wasn't.

Findley: By then, he was an expert on the properties of plastics. He had built a lab, as an instructor at the University of Illinois, to test various types of plastic materials: stretch, twist, heat, cold, all those things. He quickly became a leading expert on plastics, so he was set aside for this for the duration of the war.

DePue: His contribution was much more valuable in that respect, wasn't it?

Findley: That's right. Then, he soon got an offer to be a professor at Brown University, went there. He never got a Ph.D., but he got about three masters, and he is eccentric. He just didn't think he should have to bother with a Ph.D. He was already a full professor and a head of the department, so what else could he get? (both laugh)

DePue: Well, they played in different rules at that time in academia.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: When did you graduate from college, then?

Findley: January of '43. We had a separate commencement. There were probably twenty or thirty of us that graduated.

DePue: How did you stand in your class?

Findley: Well, I got Phi Beta Kappa, so I did okay. I'm not sure I was number one, but, to my surprise, I was invited to be in Phi Beta Kappa. Unfortunately, the grades for law school didn't arrive before they had to make the decision, (both laugh) because I think I got a B-plus and a C. That wasn't exactly stellar.

DePue: A gentleman C, though, perhaps. (both laugh) What then, after you graduated?

Findley: The war, immediately. I immediately went into service, went to Monmouth, Illinois. The campus of the Monmouth College had been taken over completely for the war, and it was a Navy prep school. I suggested they have a school newspaper, and I became the first editor of it. *Wingtips*, that was my name for it. It was a printed paper and pretty good. And believe it or not, I was able to do twenty-two push-ups. I'd have trouble doing two now.

DePue: Was this an emphasis on engineering, academic classes?

Findley: No, we had Morse code, dead reckoning flying, things like that and all interesting. I did well in all of it.

DePue: And where after that?

Findley: Then I was sent up to Davenport, Iowa to the next flight preparatory school. And then I got word that that wouldn't be the last preparatory school. So, I began to think, well, I'd better get in this, or I won't see or have any of the fun of the war. (laughs)

DePue: Again, in your biography, you said, at St. Ambrose College.

Findley: That's right, yeah.

DePue: So, you know, I have visions of somebody going into the military, and you're going through something like boot camp, with drill sergeants yelling at you.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: But it doesn't sound like that's what your experience was here, to begin with.

Findley: There was some skills training, but it was pretty fundamental. There was flight training at St. Ambrose, and I loved flying the plane. I've still got my record book. It's probably around here someplace.

DePue: So, you got in the cockpit, once you were at St. Ambrose?

Findley: Oh sure, yeah. They had an airstrip, which Monmouth did not have, so flying was a part of the program. I qualified for solo flying and did all kind of chandelles and wingovers and spins and pretty exciting.

DePue: Were you an enlisted or a commissioned officer by this time?

Findley: I was then a cadet, not a commissioned, but I was given the option of going for a direct commission at Great Lakes, so I went up there. There was a chance that I wouldn't get it, but I thought I would, and I did. They had two full lieutenants, adults in their mid-career, I think, who interviewed candidates for direct commissions. They asked me to be in charge of the cadets and the others who were gathering every day, trying to get a direct commission. I decided I was put in charge of the sequence of the interviews. They were very pleased with the way I managed that, and that helped me to a prompt commission.

DePue: Did that happen at St. Ambrose, or once you got to Great Lakes?

Findley: To Great Lakes. I took a chance on getting commissioned. And one little, almost funny, part of my experience up there: I learned to improve my dancing, because the Trianon and the Aragon were in full swing. Weekends, we would go down to have the fun of dancing at those. You probably don't know what they were like, but each of them was a giant ballroom, and they had two full bands that would take turns. It would cost ten cents a trick or whatever it was called. So, weekends were a lot of fun. I enjoyed that.

DePue: I'm a big band fan. Do you remember any of the big bands that might have gone through there?

Findley: No. But this was the big band era, so they didn't have any little bands. They were all big. (both laugh) Oh, by the way, they had my medical records wrongly filed. I was admitted for surgery on a leg one night, and the next morning, I said, "Are you sure I'm the one that ought to have leg surgery?" They looked at the chart and said, "Oh, my

Ensign Paul Findley U.S. Navy 1943.

God. We messed this up. You aren't the one that's supposed to be here." (both laugh)

DePue: Welcome to the Navy, huh?

Findley: Yeah. (both laugh)

DePue: Okay, how long were you at Great Lakes, and when were you there?

Findley: Well, it wasn't much more than a month, and that would have been… Let's see, '44. I went to Guam, probably the last of '43.

DePue: Was it there, then, that you got your commission?

Findley: Yes. Then I went to Harvard for three months, training for supply officer and then, straight out.

DePue: Well, there's a bit of irony. You got to Harvard after all. (both laugh) Was that more of an academic setting, then?

Findley: The business school is where we were stationed. I think Harvard had regular courses all the way through, but this property was dedicated to us.

DePue: Where then did you learn about all things military, like how to wear your uniform and how to salute and what the rank structure was and discipline and marksman?

Findley: I learned a lot of that at Monmouth and St. Ambrose and Great Lakes.

DePue: Were you considered to be one of those ninety-day wonders or a different category altogether?

Findley: Well, I guess. But the ninety-day wonders wound up with a commission as a line officer. They could just as well step right in and be captain of a very small ship. We weren't trained to be on the line.

DePue: What was your training?

Findley: Supply.

DePue: Is that something that you had a voice in?

Findley: No, it's one they just assigned to me. They needed them.

DePue: So you go from wanting to be an aviator to being a supply officer. What did you think about that move?

Findley: It pleased me, because I knew that I'd be shipped overseas. I didn't want to be stationed in the U.S., as some of them were.

DePue: What did your Mom think about the move?

Findley: She never said. (laughs) She really didn't. I had told her what I had done, and she said, "Well, we'll be thinking about you," that sort of comment. I'm sure she worried until the war was over. But my duty…There was a rough period when we went in at the end of the liberation of Guam. The bullets were still popping around and a lot of Japanese were still in the woods. But there's sort of a hardship period, living in a tent and all that stuff. My job was paymaster, and I was also, believe it or not, in charge of the commissary.

DePue: But that's once you got to Guam, itself?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: Let's get you from Boston, out to the Pacific. How did that occur?

Findley: That was not a good experience. I was on a troop train to Seattle, I guess. It was the depth of winter. The train had a very poor heating system. Much of the time there was no heat in the cars that I was in, so it wasn't a fun trip.

But one pleasant moment of it occurred when one of my Hollywood heroes, Gene Kelly, wandered through the room where we had a little poker game going on. We invited him to join us, which he did nicely and played one hand. I won it, straight set. That was my initiation into poker. I never really played poker before, but I learned on that trip.

It was a lengthy trip. Then we got on a converted liberty ship or a converted…I think it was built as a troop ship, but it was a liberty ship, very unstable. It bobbed around a lot, and I was sick, I think, most of the way to Hawaii. But I also read the entirety of *War and Peace* by Tolstoy. So, it was memorable for two things: vomiting over the side and reading a big book.

DePue: Had you started rethinking about being in the Navy when you were taking that trip?

Findley: No, no. I was just eager to get to Pearl Harbor. The battalion was already fitted up and had started in Atlanta, Georgia, and then moved out to Pearl Harbor. Then, one of the supply officers got orders to leave, and I took his place.

DePue: Did you know, when you were on the ship heading to Hawaii, what your unit of assignment would be, where you were going to end up?

Findley: When I got on the troop train, yes. I had the orders.

DePue: That you were going to be in a particular unit, once you got to Hawaii.

Findley: I knew that I'd be with the 72nd Seabees.

DePue: Tell me about your impressions, once you arrived in Hawaii, other than being thankful at *land*.

Findley: Well, it was a short visit, a couple of weeks. We got orders to go to Eniwetok, the gathering point for the invasion of Guam.

DePue: Do you remember what Pearl Harbor or Hawaii was like at the time? Could you still see some of the scars of the attack?

Findley: Yes. I could see the battleships down. I knew it was serious business, and I knew that Japan was a tough nut and that we were trying to win a war at two sides of the world. So, I knew it was going to be a struggle, but I never doubted for a minute that we'd win. The possibly of we just losing just never entered my mind.

DePue: So, as you said, you didn't stay there very long, though. You headed out to the Pacific shortly after that.

Findley: I remember that we had an executive officer named Clayberger, who was not popular to begin with, but I remember that he said, "Well guys, this is it." (laughs) That was the announcement. We're ready to go. It was only then that we knew it was going to be Guam, but we headed for Eniwetok. Then, the operations on Guam took longer than expected, and we stayed, swinging around the hook, for thirty days in Eniwetok. We had nothing to do but play poker.

DePue: So you got better at poker.

Findley: I did. The chips were worth a quarter… I guess fifty cents, quarter and a dime. You could lose $5 in a day, but you could have a lot of fun. I built up a pot of about two hundred and fifty, which is pretty good. But then, the tide turned. By the time we got to Guam, I was about back to zero. (both laugh) It was good.

DePue: I've got a map here of the Pacific Theater, just so I can kind of get a sense of things too. It might be hard to see, but here is Guam, right at the bottom of this map here. I know that the Battle of Guam was July and August of 1944. So, how long after the actual combat phase were you actually shipped in?

Findley: We landed in August. I'm sure.

DePue: So, right after the firing was done.

Findley: Right after most of it was done. That's right.

DePue: What was the unit's mission then?

Findley: To build a Navy airbase on a hilltop. Is that a map of Guam?

DePue: It is. I don't know if you can read that, but that's a good map of Guam during the war.

Findley: I think the Navy airbase was up here, but I'm not positive.

DePue: On the northern end of the island, it looks like?

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Before we get too much farther into the Guam experience, tell me about the 72nd Seabee Battalion.

Findley: Well, it consisted of men. I called them middle-aged men, but they probably were in their thirties and forties. They were all technicians. They were skilled at asphalt laying, skilled engineers, skilled carpenters, electricians. They were all able people, well-trained.

DePue: Heavy equipment operators?

Findley: Yes, oh yeah, bulldozers and pans all over the place. My roommate for a long time there was Homer Barger, B-a-r-g-e-r. Homer was married to a girl from Argentina. In private life, he was an expert on installing a refinery for a big steel mill. He did big installations like that. After the war, he went back to that type of work. I kept in touch with him. He was the only Seabee that I really kept in touch with, almost every month after the war. We had a great, great time together. One of his jobs was to install these giant tanks that would hold fuel oil. They were bolted together. They were not—

DePue: Not welded?

Findley: Not welded, but they were designed for fast erection. That was his job, was to make sure they were put up right and fast, and he did it. It was nothing, no problem for him.

DePue: It sounds like you were one of the younger people in the unit.

Findley: Oh, I was the youngest. In fact, several of them said—out of my earshot, but I heard about it—that I looked too young to be an officer. (both laugh)

DePue: Did you have any problems? I mean, I'm sure a lot of these people were very seasoned people, as you mention.

Findley: All over.

DePue: Did you have any problems with kind of exerting your rank and your discipline, or was that not a problem?

Findley: Well, I didn't have authority over any of the other officers. My total authority was over the paymaster crew of about five enlisted men and over the chief cook. I had to get approval of menus each week. I remember we had quite a party in this mess hall for New Year's Day and Easter. I sang in the choir a few times. (laughs) I was on very good terms with a lieutenant named Hamburg, who was a Congregational minister, but he was the chaplain for the unit. Chappy liked tennis, so we had a tennis court built pretty fast. (both laugh) Lots of funny episodes happened on Guam.

DePue: What were your living quarters?

Findley: Tents, never graduated from tents. Lucille was a Navy flight nurse, and she and her buddies were in a tent too, for a while. They did graduate to a Quonset hut, but we did not. No complaints.

DePue: Did you see many of the native people of Guam? Did you have many relationships with them?

Findley: They were right next to the base property, so they would show up sometimes, come in to watch a new movie, (laughs) outdoors movie. We would sit on a log and watch the movie, and sometimes we'd be sitting with a native nearby, but we didn't have many dealings with them.

DePue: Was it the unit's expectation that your unit was going to be there in Guam for a while?

Findley: We would be there until the invasion of Japan. There was no doubt about it. There was some talk that we might go to the Aleutian Islands or Japan, but that was scrubbed. I'm glad it was. That would have been very cold. We weren't happy about going in on the invasion. We knew that the casualties would be very heavy. But it didn't bother me. There was nothing I could do about it, so I just made up my mind to take what came along.

DePue: Well, you had mentioned several times, up to this point, that you were a young man in a hurry to get to the combat zone.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: Once you're in the combat zone, you were not really combat, except I know there was—

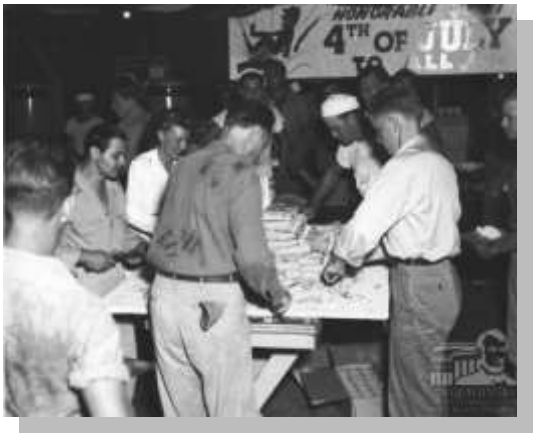
Findley: That's right. It was really a soft assignment I had. We had plenty of time to play softball, which we did a lot of afternoons. The duty for the paymaster wasn't arduous. It was mainly signing pay cards. We had what was called "the rough roll" and then "the smooth roll." The records would be on the rough roll. Then they were transferred later to smooth roll. Then they got bright and decided they didn't have to go through all that and just had what amounted to the smooth roll, not the rough roll. So, the job got simpler as time went on.

DePue: Were you kind of anxious, once you'd been there for a while, to get into combat still, or were you content to stay where you were?

Findley: I thought invading Japan would be quite enough. (both laugh) I was called to hold paydays aboard a couple of ships. I remember one time, I had to climb a rope ladder down the side of the ship and have the big bag of money over my shoulder. Another time, I was transferred in a chair that was swung from one deck to the other. That was a little variety. But fortunately, Lucille was there quite often, and that added to the excitement.

DePue: Tell me about how you met her in the first place. It's Lucille Gemme?

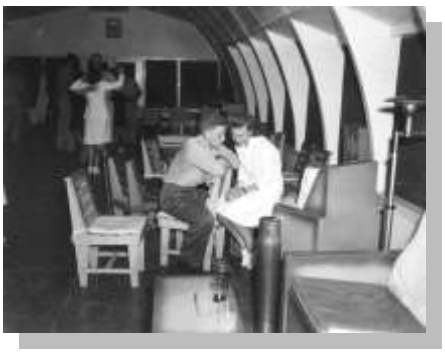
Findley: One of my properties that I had control of was the Quonset structure that you can see in the background. There's an officer's club, built after everything else was done, built as an officers' club and a Quonset. It was very nicely fitted out, had a restroom for ladies, as well as men. The other units on the island would be envious, of course, because most of them didn't have an officers' club. Anyhow, a certain unit was given permission by the skipper of the battalion to use our officers' club for a party, but I was in charge. It was my baby to take care of, so I attended it. Lucille was one of the female guests of the pilots, and her host got so drunk, he was just bleary-eyed. He could hardly stay in the chair.



July 4, 1945 party, organized by Commissary Officer Findley (right), cutting the cake.

DePue: This was a Navy aviator?

Findley: No, Air Force. (laughs) They were all Air Force officers. I could see that he was hardly in the shape to take her back to her quarters, so she readily agreed to let me do it. So, that's how it started. During the evening, that photo was taken.



DePue: This is the first night that you met her.

Findley: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: Well, Congressman, we'll certainly include this picture here. This is a great photo. You two are pretty close already, the first night. (both laugh)

Findley: I noticed that.

DePue: You're just a few inches away from her.

The night Paul Findley and Lucille Gemme met at the Officers Club on Guam, 1945.

Findley: Well, I think I had her backed up against the wall, didn't I? (both laugh)

DePue: You did. You did. Now I don't blame you at all. She was a striking young lady, it looks like.

Lieutenant JG, Lucille M. Gemme.

Findley: Yeah, she was. There were only eight of them, so there were eight flight nurses. In the early days, there wasn't any Army. This was in the early period, when the Army was being established, when they had the party. The flight nurses had been established on our airbase, just shortly before this party.

DePue: The odds were incredibly against you, though, if you're looking at just the percentage, the numbers of men versus available young women there.

Findley: The *Chicago Tribune* wrote a feature story about me, and the guy in charge figured that the odds were forty to one against me…not forty to one. It's a lot more than that, probably forty thousand to one. (both laugh) I think that's about it, because there were a lot of personnel on the island by then. It was loaded down.

DePue: Apparently, though, after that first meeting, you didn't waste any time courting her seriously? Would that be a fair thing to say?

Findley: I courted her seriously. I didn't waste time. (laughs)

DePue: And she was obviously receptive.

Findley: Yes. For one thing, I was in charge of the officers' mess, along with the other eating facilities. Whenever Lucille would be able to be my guest in the officers' club, everybody rejoiced, because the food was a lot better. (both laugh) Yeah, they all enjoyed being with her. She was quite a hit.

DePue: Tell me what it was about her—other than her looks, obviously—but what else about her really attracted you?

Findley: Being selected as a Navy flight nurse put her in a pretty small group, because this was experimental. I don't think this type rescue had been developed anyplace in the war. They knew that they were going to attack Iwo Jima, and they wanted nurses trained for combat circumstances, able to ferry new recruits into the battlefield and then return, with a full load of injured. I

thought that was very commendable and very exciting. It meant that Lucille had passed all kinds of tests to get there. Yes, she was fun.

DePue: Obviously she had the personality to go along with the looks, as well.

Findley: She did. She did.

DePue: I want to learn more about what she did, but before I do that, I wanted to ask you about Thanksgiving and Christmas. Do you have any memories about either of those holidays, once you were on Guam?

Findley: Well, I know that I encouraged the mess hall to be specially decorated and have a special menu on those occasions, and they did. They were glad to. We rarely had visitors of high rank, although Lucille, being a rare human being on Guam, a rare lady on Guam, was invited to the top quarters. I remember Nimitz invited her to dinner. She wasn't the only one. A couple of them were invited to dinner. [Admiral] Chester Nimitz was the host, and she had a delightful evening up there. He had quarters on the top of the highest hill in Guam, I believe. She still kept the place card she had, which he autographed.

Of course, every time she went to Iwo Jima, she could be a target, and she had to hop in a foxhole a time or two, just because the Japanese were able to raid at that time. They chose their trip so that they would make the transfer at dawn, because the fighter planes generally would not arrive until midday.

DePue: Fighter planes from Japan, itself.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: I know it was just a few days before the Marines were able to seize that tiny airstrip that was on Iwo Jima. Is that where she was flying in?

Findley: Yeah, yeah. That tiny airstrip was it.

DePue: And there's still ferocious fighting going on in the northern end of the island.

Findley: That's right. And they would have to repair the airstrip every time a plane took off, because it would be immediately bombed. But, fortunately, the bombs weren't big enough to really take it out of service.

DePue: Was there a hospital on Guam, as well, where these—

Findley: No, no. There were a lot of medics, and they were brave people. A lot of them died. There's a man who lives here in Jacksonville named Warren Musch.

DePue: I've interviewed Warren.

Findley: Warren played in the trombone section when I directed the IC band. (DePue laughs) He helped me when I was first a candidate for Congress. He was there for every day of the Battle of Iwo Jima. He never got scratched, but he said he saw a lot of people blown up.

DePue: You say Lucille was picking them up, the casualties in Iwo Jima, and then they were flying back to Guam.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Once they were at Guam, was there some kind of a hospital there at Guam?

Findley: I think they called it a medical center, maybe. They almost immediately put them on bigger planes to fly them to Hawaii for medical care.

DePue: So, Lucille and these other nurses that were in this group, were they…

Findley: They didn't go to Pearl Harbor. They were back and forth to Guam only; except, when they had time off, they might hitch a ride to Pearl Harbor.

DePue: But they weren't performing any nursing duties at Guam, itself, only these duties on the flights going back and forth?

Findley: I guess. I don't know for sure. There must have been a major naval medical center hospital. I'm not sure.

DePue: Well, I would think, just the nature of the injuries that they were seeing, that that experience itself had to be very traumatic, dealing with those injured.

Findley: They used the triage system, and they only flew back the ones that had a chance to survive. The nurses on the planes had the tough job of keeping them alive for a six-hour flight back to Guam. I got the nurses before, some years ago, to estimate the number of patients they did get back. They said there were at least 2,000 wounded that the flight nurses brought from Iwo Jima to Guam, and they lost only one injured Marine inflight. That doesn't mean that the rest of them all survived, but they got them back safe and sound, except for one.

And they had to fly close to the surface of the ocean, because the cabins were not pressurized.

DePue: This sounds like something of an experiment, at the time, as well. This was something new.

Findley: I think so. I think so.

DePue: Was it just Iwo Jima?

Findley: No, as soon as Iwo was secured, they did the same thing at Okinawa, which was an even bigger battlefield.

DePue: And farther away, quite a bit farther away.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: What was the aircraft, do you know, that they were flying?

Findley: DC-3. That's what Ozark [Airlines] used in its infancy.

DePue: That's the standard commercial aircraft for a lot of years.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Were there any Japanese survivors left over, after the mop up on Guam itself?

Findley: I don't know what the numbers were, but many of them were still wandering alone in the woods and didn't even know that the Japanese had surrendered.

DePue: Did they occasionally come out and surrender or occasionally come out and fight?

Findley: Oh, they would occasionally get brave enough to watch a movie at night with us (laughs). A few of them even got in a chow line to eat. Many of them were desperate for food. In fact, Lucille said that a Japanese came to the Quonset. It was a Quonset by then, where the nurses were quartered. (laughs) She said they didn't know quite what to do, but they could tell he was hungry. He wanted food, so they gave him a couple of slices of bread with butter on, or what passed for butter, and he ate the food and just scrambled right back in the woods. I'm sure there were quite a few.

DePue: You hear the stories about the survivors that were left behind, and you also hear the stories about how fanatical the typical Japanese soldier was, that they would fight to the death. Did you have any close encounters, where they would stage attacks or anything?

Findley: No. In fact, one of them came into the camp to surrender (laughs), and one of the shipmates of the 72nd was defecating on a log at the time. He said, "I'm too busy. Go up to the road. The chaplain's up there." So, that's where he went. I guess they communicated somehow. (laughs)

DePue: The position you're in, that's speaks universally, I think, whatever the language would be. (both laugh) Okay, you had to be hearing stories, especially from Lucille, about the things that she was seeing at Iwo Jima and Okinawa and especially about the nature of the combat there. Once Okinawa is secured, then the discussion's got to be about going into Japan itself. What were your thoughts and others' about doing that?

Findley: I assume they had a role for these flight nurses, but we all assumed it would be a slaughter on both sides. But we knew we had to obey orders, so why worry about it?

DePue: This is probably about the same time. There's things going on in the United States and Europe. I wanted to start with asking about FDR's death on April 12, 1945. Do you remember that?

Findley: Oh, I do. I was on Guam, and I couldn't imagine how Harry Truman could pick up the reins. I knew that he had never been brought into the White House. He never had any kind of on-the-job training as vice-president. He was ignored, really. He just wasn't of interest to FDR. I guess FDR figured he'd live forever. But I really wondered how Harry Truman could really provide the leadership needed. That was a time when I fully comprehended the achievement of FDR. I saw him, not as a politician, but as a truly giant leader, at a time of great need.

DePue: It took his death to get you to the point of recognizing that?

Findley: Oh yeah, sure.

DePue: It wasn't too long after that—I think, May eighth or May ninth—V-E Day in Europe. What was the reaction of you and others about that?

Findley: Well, we got snippets of news, but we really didn't even know what was going on on Guam in great detail. I can't remember if we had the miniature editions of *Time* and *Newsweek*. I don't believe we did.

DePue: How about *Stars and Stripes*?

Findley: *Stars and Stripes* would be the next best. It was the main source. And honestly, I don't remember seeing a *Stars and Stripes* on Guam. I'm sure they were there, but never got to me.

DePue: When did you end up hearing about the atrocities that the Nazis were doing in Europe, the death camps and the holocaust? Was that well after all of this?

Findley: Yes. I have to say I don't know. I was on Japan for two or three months, but my life was filled with what's happening right there. I don't believe I was aware of the death camps.

DePue: When you were still on Guam, there had to be a lot of talk about the invasion of Japan.

Findley: Oh, yeah.

DePue: Did you know the mission, the specific mission, the 72nd was going to have?

Findley: I didn't know until the armistice was over. We had a way to learn some details about the ceremony of surrender and the fact that the surrender would permit the survival of the hereditary ruler.

DePue: That Emperor Hirohito has taken position.

Findley: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: Tell me about then hearing about the atomic bomb: the first one at Hiroshima on the sixth, and then Nagasaki on the ninth of August.

Findley: Well, frankly, we were all relieved and grateful. I think that was true of everybody. We didn't really comprehend the devastation caused, because we didn't have any details about how close to surrender they were, anyway. We were very, very much thankful, no doubt about it.

DePue: When you first heard the news, did you even comprehend what an atomic bomb was?

Findley: No, but I did when I got to Nagasaki.

DePue: Tell me about that experience.

Findley: Well, my buddy…What was his name? I can point him out in the picture here. (laughs) He and I chummed around a lot together. I had a jeep, so we headed for Nagasaki within days after we landed. By the time we got to the site, the site had been cleaned. The Japanese have some special talent at organization and discipline. There were no bodies around. There was just a great, vast, empty area that had nothing bigger than my fist, except for a few twisted I-beams.

It made me realize that we were lucky we had the bomb, instead of the other guy. And I think the Nazis were pretty close. I think they were close to having one. We heaved a sigh of relief. But we went in, as scheduled, to Sasebo Naval Base on Kyushu Island, one of the main islands, and we occupied, for our barracks, the site where the training camp for Japanese sailors, who were much the same that we were, construction battalion type. We noticed the difference in plumbing in the restrooms. [No seat. Just a hole in the floor.] (both laugh)

DePue: Between the officers' and the enlisted restrooms?

Findley: Well, no, for all of us. We were all in the same boat, the same boat. (both laugh)

DePue: I assume that Lucille is not with you now, once you got to the occupation duties in Japan.

Findley: Oh, that's right.

DePue: What had been the discussion before the two of you left Guam about your future together?

Findley: Before I left Japan, the commanding officer of the battalion told me that he could arrange for me to stay in Japan and China for a while and browse around and see the place. I told him, "No, I'd rather get back." Of course, Lucille was the main magnet, plus my mother.

DePue: When you were still on Guam together, had you proposed to her?

Findley: (pause) Oh, I'm sure I had. (both laugh) I can't cite a day or an hour.

DePue: There clearly was some understanding between the two of you, though.

Findley: Yeah, that's right. We were planning to get married. I bought a ring at Olathe, Kansas. There was a naval station there…still is, I believe. A simple diamond ring.

DePue: I want to finish off with just a couple questions about your impressions of your occupation duty in Japan.

DePue: What was your impression, once you got to Japan and Sasebo, in terms of the kind of reception you would have received, had you had to fight your way there?

Findley: The base was interior on a small, little inlet, and the hillsides were just covered with armaments, ready to go. We would have been under unmerciful fire. We would have had trouble unloading the ship and having anything to unload. My hunch is, we wouldn't have landed. We would have been destroyed.

DePue: Did you see an awful lot of devastation, once you did get to occupation duty?

Findley: Oh, yes. The Naval base had been attacked, of course. I think I just took that one trip into the countryside to see Nagasaki, but I saw a lot of effects of the bombing, fire bombing. We had set some big cities ablaze.

DePue: I know that both Nagasaki and Hiroshima, they kind of had to deliberately not firebomb those, so that they had an appropriate target for the atomic bombs.

Findley: Nagasaki was not a military site, no arms industry, so far as I know. It was just a big city, and that's why they obliterated it.

DePue: Now, before you got there, you had undoubtedly had a strong impression of the Japanese soldier and how they would resist. What was your impression of the Japanese people, once you got there?

Findley: By then, we'd had experiences with several of the Japanese on Guam, and frankly, we felt…pretty much, we felt sorry for them. We didn't see the vengeful beasts that had been portrayed. I'm sure there were a lot of kamikaze types, a lot of obedience to the emperor. My belief is that the government that MacArthur established could not have been better. It was truly outstanding. And I think the consideration we gave to the emperor's life probably tempered some of the outrage of the Japanese.

DePue: Did you ever feel threatened or at danger by the Japanese people?

Findley: No, no.

DePue: No?

Findley: Never, but I was never around population centers in Japan.

DePue: When did you return to the United States? Was that in 1946?

Findley: Well, '46, we were married in January, so I left Japan…just a guess, it must have been October or something like that.

DePue: Just one more question for you, then. You've talked at length about your military, your combat experiences. You didn't really see a lot of direct combat. Lucille apparently got closer to the beast than you did. But what did you conclude? What were your feelings about the experience and how it changed you?

Findley: I concluded that war was about the most uncivilized thing that we had ever engaged in. I couldn't see how it could be justified. I even had some doubts about whether our entry into the war was a good thing. I believe today that it was essential. One thing that really, really impressed me was meeting a man who had been in a German P.O.W. camp, who talked to one of the German soldiers and learned that he had been trained already to take part in the occupation of the eastern seaboard of the U.S., because he was fully informed on the geography of part of Connecticut. He knew exactly what the names were or what the rivers were. Here, before Hitler had any real shot at defeating Britain, he was thinking ahead of America. That really puzzled me, that the Germans would be that thoughtful and detailed in planning ahead, because this guy didn't make it up out of thin air. He knew the facts of that particular spot where he would be expected to be in charge. It made me realize that the war was needed.

DePue: That's probably a good place for us to stop today. We've talked for close to two-and-a-half hours here.

Findley: I'm pleased that my voice held out, because everything about me is falling apart. (both laugh)

DePue: From my perspective, you're doing just great. So, we will stop today, and pick this up and talk about your career getting into journalism and then politics, the next time we meet. Thank you very much, Congressman.

Findley: Thank you.

Interview with Paul Findley

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Interview #2: January 29, 2013

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Tuesday, January 29, 2013. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today, I'm back for my second session with Congressman Paul Findley in Jacksonville, in his office. Good morning, congressman.

Findley: Good morning.

DePue: I think last time we talked, we had a great conversation about your World War II experiences. As I recall, we kind of left you still in Japan. So, I'd like to have you start by telling us about returning to the United States and that momentous decision of getting married right after you got back.

Findley: I was still commissary and paymaster for the battalion when I went to Japan. I think I said a few words about the atmosphere there. Duties were not arduous. I was able to get around the nearby territory without any trouble. The Japanese were not hostile at all. Extremely disciplined, they took us in stride.

It was a very chauvinistic society at that time. One of the vivid memories I have is of, obviously a husband, walking down the country road, followed by his wife pulling a cart. The wife did all the labor. It made me realize what a backward system they had at that time. Douglas MacArthur was exactly what Japan needed and what we needed. I thought he did a superb job, managing affairs there, because he ended the chauvinistic background. Women were first class during his administration. He paid the proper reverence to the emperor—left the emperor alone—and the emperor left him alone and gave him free hand. The emperor never interfered—I don't think at all—in any way with MacArthur's decisions. So, I saw quite a transition in the short time that I was there. I also had the opportunity to visit Nagasaki.

DePue: I did want to ask one question. I'm pretty sure that part of what MacArthur did in establishing that new government was gave women the vote, as well.

Findley: Yes, yes.

DePue: When did you actually return from Japan?

Findley: Well, let me answer this way. There was a new skipper of the battalion when we went ashore—forget his name—but he was a generous, kind type. He said, "I have orders for you to go back to the states, but before you do, I could give you new orders to visit Shanghai and a few places in China, if you want to." But I had been away from the states for, I guess, about seventeen months at that time, and I was ready to go home. So, I passed up that opportunity and grabbed the first empty seat on an aircraft going to Guam and from there to Pearl and then to the states.

DePue: Where was Lucille during the months that you were actually in occupation duty?

Findley: Okinawa was settled, so I guess she had no duties at all, temporarily. She and her buddies were probably just waiting in a Quonset for something to happen. I, of course, didn't see her while I was in Japan. I made a date to try to meet her at Olathe, Kansas where a naval station existed. I think there's still a naval base of sorts there. We did meet in Olathe. I offered her a ring, and she took it. (both laugh) I showed it to one of her buddies before she got there. All I could afford was a very simple diamond ring, bought from the ship's store there. She accepted that. We didn't fix a date, but it was settled.

DePue: This was after you returned from Japan.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: You hadn't been formally engaged before that time?

Findley: Well, it was iffy. (both laugh) We talked about it, but nothing was settled until she accepted the ring. I thought that was an important step, and I guess she

did, too. Once I got back to the states I went directly to Princeton, Illinois, where my mother lived. I made several trips to Boston, by train, in the next month, each time talking to Lucille and her family. My first trip to Boston put me into Stoughton, Mass., where her parents lived. She was detained by weather at an airport in Buffalo, New York.

DePue: Known for its snow.

Findley: So, she was not at her home when I met her parents. (laughs) That was another rather interesting experience, but they were very kind to me. By the time I made the second round trip from Princeton to Boston—that's Princeton, Illinois—we were settled on getting married. In fact, her father had a wedding license waiting for me when I got off the train. (laughs) So, we had a quick wedding, very simple, just two couples, her parents and her sister and husband in the priest's home. I was a Protestant. I guess, otherwise, I'd have been married in the cathedral or the church.

DePue: She was Catholic?

Findley: Yeah, yeah. She got assurance that I gave to the priest that I would not interfere with the religious education of the children. I didn't like that, but that was the only way I could get Lucille, so I said okay. (both laugh)

DePue: What was the wedding date?

Findley: January 8, 1946. Lucille was not quite out of the Navy, but I was out. So, after the wedding I headed for D.C., where I expected to become a law student at George Washington University Law School.

I signed up, but I had renewed my acquaintance with Clarence Streit, the author, then a national figure, a very prominent guy. He was on network radio nationwide quite often, debating what ought to be done in the way of the future organization of the U.S. So, I learned that he was going to start a magazine right away, called *Freedom and Union,* which he said would be a monthly and would continue indefinitely. He had some high powered friends. James Monsanto Quingy, the head of Monsanto Enterprises was one of them. He, of course, was a wealthy man. He had a lot of support in the Roosevelt administration.

DePue: What was it about what Streit advocated that so interested you?

Findley: He was the only one I knew of who had a plan to outlaw war. He proposed a federation, not an alliance, but a federation of thirteen democracies. That was his proposal in the book, *Union Now.* They included the Low Countries, the Scandinavian countries, France, Britain, the British Commonwealth, plus the U.S. It added up to about…Well, France was in it, and there were Low Countries. He proposed it'd be an organic union, controlling the foreign

policy, having a single defense force, a common currency and a free trade area within the eleven countries. I think Iceland was one of the countries.

DePue: You said the United States was, as well?

Findley: Oh, yes. He saw the U.S. as the central figure, without which it couldn't work.

DePue: Was Germany one of the countries?

Findley: No. Germany was just beyond occupied territory status and not ready for it, in his view.

DePue: But that could have been a possibility later on, to incorporate other nations?

Findley: It was. In fact, I think NATO…There are sixteen members of NATO, including Iceland and the Federal Republic—that would have been western Germany—it was included.

DePue: But this is before the establishment of NATO.[6]

Findley: That's right.

DePue: When you say, "outlawing war," do you mean just within the member nations of the federation?

Findley: Yes. But Streit said that, once other countries gained experience in self-government and thereby qualified for admission, it would gradually become a worldwide federation. He didn't see it as a rigid number of states, although he did recommend highly that it would be limited, initially, to countries that had a period of self-government and protected individual liberty. He thought that the transition would be hard enough for that group. It would be impossible, if they tried to bring in other countries.

DePue: What did you think about the establishment of the United Nations, and what did Streit think about it?

Findley: The United Nations came into being…was that in…I forget the year. It was already in being.

DePue: Yeah, it was right at the end of the war.[7]

Findley: That's right. But it had, in the preamble or the charge of the U.N., the option for members within the United Nations to form a tighter union, if they wished. His emblem was the flambeau, the burning torch, with two circles around it. The outer circle was the U.N. The inner circle was the federation of the

[6] NATO was founded April 4, 1949.

[7] The UN was founded October 24, 1945.

governments into a single federal government. It had enormous appeal during the war and after the war.

Owen J. Roberts was a justice of the Supreme Court. He resigned that position, according to the reports I've read, in order to devote his full time to advancing the cause of a federation. I don't think he was linked directly with Streit necessarily, but with the concept. So, it was a big idea, drawing attention to big people. There was somebody from Texas—a big personality under Roosevelt—who also teamed up with Streit. Streit had a lot of linkages in Europe, too. Maurice Schumann[8], "the Voice of Free France," was one of the most ardent and persistent supporters of the federation idea. I became closely acquainted with him later years, when I was still in the Congress.

DePue: I'm curious about one thing here. By this time, you already had identified yourself as a Republican. Now, this is way before your time, but for the League of Nations, the Republicans were those who were so strongly opposed to Wilson, primarily because of the issues they had about surrendering some of American sovereignty to this extra organization.

Findley: That argument didn't make sense to me, because every time a nation made a ratified treaty it surrendered a little bit of its sovereignty. So, this was not unprecedented for sovereignty to be up for change. I felt the challenge of nuclear war was so massive that we should—as Lincoln would say, "As our case is new, we have to think anew and act anew"—disenthrall ourselves.

DePue: So, standing at ground zero in Nagasaki had some of that impact.

Findley: Oh, it did, yes. You say I was a Republican. I guess I didn't think of partisan politics at all during the war. I never voted for Roosevelt, though, so I guess I did. (laughs)

DePue: How long did you work for Streit?

Findley: It was about a year-and-a-half. During that time, Lucille and I would occasionally take a side trip. We could borrow an automobile and drive to a country town that we heard wanted to sell the local newspaper. (laughs) So, we went to upstate New York a time or two and to Ohio on another trip. In fact, we thought one of the other employees of Streit might join us in this. But we didn't have any money. (laughs) All we had was a dream.

DePue: Well, and apparently, still some printers' ink stuck under your fingernails.

[8] Maurice Schumann (1911-1998) became known as "the voice of France" for his broadcasts into Nazi-controlled France from 1940 to 1944. He was an aide to General Charles de Gaulle and later served as Foreign Minister from 1969 to 1973 in the administration of Georges Pompidou. See Schumann's obituary in the *New York Times*, February 11, 1998.

Findley: Printers' ink had its impact. I got started in high school, and it never left me. When I got back and when I got married, thinking about a career, I thought maybe it'd be good to have a law degree. But, when I had a chance to work on the budding journalistic enterprise that Streit founded, I jumped at it. I was paid forty a week, not an hour (both laugh), and lots of volunteer work at night. He finally raised my pay to fifty a week. And he didn't fuss, he didn't complain when I told him that I had, out of the blue, just a tantalizing offer from Jacksonville.

Two of the leaders of Jacksonville, one of them was Richard Yates Rowe, Sr., who had founded an insurance company here, called Central National Life. I had known him when I was a boy. I chummed around some with two of his sons, Dick, Jr. and Harris Rowe. They were friends of mine. We'd play ball together, and had fun together. Dick Rowe [Richard Yates Rowe, Sr.], at that time, was state treasurer of Illinois. He and his partner in the newspaper business—his partner was named Reaugh Jennings [1894-1954]. The spelling of Reaugh is R-e-a-u-g-h…It's a family name, but it's pronounced Rāy.

Reaugh Jennings and Dick Rowe owned the weekly in Winchester, the one in Virginia, nearby Jacksonville [Illinois]. They heard that the *Pike County Republican* in Pittsfield was for sale, so Rowe wrote to me and asked me if I'd be interested in joining them and buying it and being the manager of the paper. Well, I'd never run a paper, but I knew I could do anything, so I, of course, grabbed the offer. (laughs) I was thrilled, because it was close to home in Jacksonville. I could renew my friendships there, as well as new ones in Pittsfield.

The newspaper had fascinating Lincoln connections, because one of the ancestors of the *Republican* was the *Pike County Free Flag*, I believe. It was owned by John Nicolay at one time, who became the private secretary of Lincoln. Nicolay was the first employee that Abraham Lincoln hired after he was president-elect. He hired him to be private secretary. Lincoln had first met Nicolay in Pittsfield, and here I was going to buy the descendant of the paper that Nicolay owned. He was a printer's devil at first, but he was so successful and hardworking that he was able to buy out the owner, which is what I did myself with the *Pike County Republican*. I was able to buy out the other stockholders and attain ownership of the *Pike County Republican*.

DePue: That's a few years down the road, though, as I understand.

Findley: Oh yes, yes.

DePue: I just want to clarify something. A printer's devil: What exactly is a printer's devil?

Findley: That was a young man—they were always men—who learned how to set type and to publish the newspaper. So, Nicolay—when he was in White Hall he had a job in a general store—and he saw that the *Old Flag*—I guess it was called—weekly newspaper in Pittsfield was hunting for a printer's devil, so he packed up and got the job.[9]

DePue: When did you make the move, then, to become the managing editor, I guess, of the *Pike County Republican*?

Findley: It was '47, August of '47. (laughs) We didn't own a car, but I bought a long-used 1936 Chevrolet. I bought it in '47. (laughs)This was a time when new cars were almost nonexistent, and used cars were expensive. I bought this '36 Chevrolet from the lady who was Editor-in-Chief of the magazine owned by Streit. I paid three hundred bucks for it. So, we piled all of our belongings in the back seat or on top and drove to Pittsfield. Luckily, we didn't have a blown-out tire by the time we got to Pittsfield, but there were some big bulges in a couple of them. (DePue laughs) During the trip, some of Lucille's clothing disappeared from the top of the car and was never recovered, so it was eventful for Lucille. (laughs) She entered the land of cornfields and misunderstood what corn was all about. She thought it was sweet corn. (both laugh)

DePue: Probably thinking that's a lot of sweet corn.

Findley: Yeah, she was. (laughs) And she liked sweet corn. (both laugh)

DePue: So, this was her first trip to the Midwest.

Findley: Indeed. In fact, to her community near Boston, the Hudson River was the barrier of civilization. (both laugh) Beyond that was wild country.

DePue: Where did you set up lodging then? Was it Pittsfield?

Findley: We rented a room with a maiden lady who was a school teacher, and we had to go through her bedroom to get to the restroom. I remember that vividly. (laughs)

DePue: So much for that part of privacy, huh? (Findley laughs)

Findley: It was obviously a rough transition for Lucille. She was used to small town Massachusetts, quite different from small town Illinois. She was not at ease having people talk to her that she never met. It was just common practice in Pittsfield. You'd talk to everybody. There weren't any barriers. That was a big

[9] The sequence of the names of this newspaper in Pittsfield is as follows: *The Pike Press,* 1842-1846; *The Free Press,* 1846-1860; *Pike County Journal*, 1860-1868; *The Old Flag*, 1868-1893; *Pike County Republican*, 1893-1970; *The Pike Press*, 1970-present. Paul Findley changed the name in 1970. See "Pike Press, Pittsfield," Illinois Press Association Foundation, http://www.illinoispress.org.

change for her, but she came to like it. She found a few people that liked to play bridge, so she was happy during the day. She was an RN, so she helped the family income by her nursing.

DePue: Did she work part-time?

Findley: She worked private nursing for a while. She worked for a couple of doctors and got acquainted with a lot of people fast. We soon found a small house we could rent. No, we went directly from this upstairs room to an upstairs apartment. It was a residence owned by Ed Lowry, L-o-w-r-y. Ed was the premier gambling machine magnate for the whole area of Illinois—pinball machines, mainly—but they took money and paid out money.

DePue: But this would have been illegal at the time, correct?

Findley: It was, but it was very common. Ed encouraged cooperation by making payments to the mayors or presidents of the village councils. Then they, in some cases, made that income for the institution. [In] other cases, they put it in their pocket. Ed didn't try to direct where it went. He owned a lot of property in Pittsfield, including the house we were in. His brother, Walt, occupied that house and rented the upstairs to us.

It went along smoothly, until Adlai Stevenson, who was governor of Illinois, ordered the state police to crack down on gambling machines. One night they covered Pike County thoroughly, confiscated all of the pinball machines and one-arm bandits, and put them outside Pittsfield, west of Pittsfield, in a junction of highways, and chopped them up and burned them. That was Adlai Stevenson's policy and practice, and I approved thoroughly. I didn't endorse what he did editorially, (both laugh) but I did describe the evidence that was destroyed as gambling. Ed preferred that it be called gaming, not gambling. (laughs) This created some friction between me and my landlord, who owned the house, and they immediately raised the rent to ten bucks, or fifteen, a month. So, we started looking for another house and another dwelling and found a small house we rented. We were there for a number of years, until I took the liberty of buying a Lustron, while Lucille was in Boston with her family. When did I buy it? You know what a Lustron house is?

DePue: No, I'm not familiar with it.

Findley: That was one of the great ideas to emerge from World War II.[10] The man who designed it was a good designer, but he was a poor salesman. They built an excellent, up-to-date assembly line. The entire house would arrive on a single

[10] Lustron houses were created to help alleviate the housing shortage faced by returning World War II veterans. The houses were made of prefabricated, porcelain enamel steel panels. They were manufactured from 1948 to 1950. http://www.lustronpreservation.org.

trailer. Everything was there, and in two-day's time, the new house would be functioning.

DePue: So, a prefabricated house.

Findley: All you had to do was provide the concrete slab. Our neighbor in Pittsfield had the agency for Lustrons over quite a wide area, and he sold a lot of them, from Rushville down to Calhoun County. A few still survive in Pittsfield, and there's one here in Jacksonville. They're as good as they were when they were put in right after the war. It was baked enamel-covered, steel parts all the way through. The interior doors slid into the walls and out. We bought one that had three bedrooms, very small, but still, separate bedrooms. I think we paid—including the land in Pittsfield—$13,500, and we owned our first house. We stayed there until I was elected to Congress.

DePue: Tell me more about running the newspaper. I would assume you put in some long hours, but that was an important experience for you.

Findley: It sure was. We had an antique rotary press. We would make up a full page, roll that full page under, with a matting on the top, which would come out. It would have to be carefully backed up here and there to avoid smudging. Then, that mat would be put inside a cylinder, and hot type would be run inside the cylinder to make it form a cylinder that would print that page. It was a laborious process, but it did print up to twelve pages at one time. It was a lot of trouble. The paper was forever breaking. We'd have to rethread the press. (laughs)

So, publishing a weekly newspaper was not all fun. It was a hard job, but I loved it. For the first time, I had a newspaper where I could write editorials to express my own views, and I did. That brought my acquaintance around the State of Illinois, because I would go to press conventions and meet the others. And when the time came for me to be an active candidate, I knew, to some extent, every editor in the congressional district.

DePue: When you were writing editorials at that time, were they local focus, state focus or national focus?

Findley: It varied. I remember when Truman fired MacArthur [in 1951]. I wrote an editorial defending Truman's action. I thought he was absolutely right. He had to. That didn't enhance my standing with the Republicans, because most of them were the other way.

DePue: Do you recall your reaction when we first decided to go to war in South Korea? That would have been June of 1950.

Findley: I had grave doubts about it. Truman didn't call it a war. He called it a police action, and he acted under the U.N.

DePue: With no declaration of war.

Findley: Yeah, that's right, a police action, under the U.N. One could question the constitutionality of what he did, as Bob Taft did,[11] but at least he responded promptly to a challenge that a lot of countries felt had to be resisted, not just the U.S. I didn't say much about it, but I accepted it as something that had to be done.

DePue: I wanted to ask you one other question. I'm stepping farther back, but 1948, I believe, is when that important election in the United Nations occurred: whether or not to establish the nation of Israel. Were you paying any attention to that at the time?

Findley: No. I probably couldn't name three states in the Middle East. I just had no knowledge about that part of the world. (pause)

I remember when Churchill and Truman went to Missouri for the Iron Curtain speech [in 1946], and I thought to myself, I ought to go and hear that, but I didn't. I was busy getting out a weekly. But it proved to be one of the most important speeches ever given, as far as I was concerned. I got tapes of the speech, and I played them many times while I was driving around. I could almost recite the speech from memory. My wife got tired of listening to them. (both laugh) But he had phrases in that speech that still ring so true today. Churchill saw the Secretary General as policemen of the U.N. He saw the U.N. Secretary General being armed with fighter planes [subject to] his order, so that he could respond to trouble spots anyplace in the world. Churchill talked about common citizenship with the rest of the British Commonwealth, but I think he also saw the outstretched hand of destiny, bringing us into common citizenship, at least with Britain and probably within NATO, NATO-wide.

So, it was one of his most precise statements of analysis and forecast that Churchill ever gave. Now, the Iron Curtain phrase got all the headlines, but there was a lot of meat beyond that. But I missed that. After, years later, I went to Fulton, got some tapes and enjoyed that hugely. I still have a file in my current filing cabinet that contains the text of the speech he gave. I'm jumping around a bit.

DePue: That's fine. I think I've been jumping around. I've been drawing you to be jumping around, so that's fine. (Findley laughs) I know it was 1951, maybe later in 1952, you made a decision to run for the state legislature.

Findley: I did, ran for state senator. There were four counties, Calhoun, Scott, Pike and Adams. There were three candidates for the Republican nomination. One of them was a lawyer from Calhoun County, a one-armed lawyer. (laughs) The

[11] Robert Taft (1894-1954) was a Republican Senator from Ohio who unsuccessfully sought the Republican presidential nomination in 1940, 1948, and 1952.

other was Lillian Schlagenhauf.[12] That's a nine-cylinder name. At the time, she was one of the stars of state politics. She was mainly a public speaker, but she saw the opening in the state's senate race and decided to run as a Republican. I saw it as a chance to kind of cut my teeth, see what I could do. I really didn't think I'd ever make it. I spent three hundred bucks, as I recall, on the total campaign.

DePue: What did Lucille think of your decision to run for the legislature?

Findley: Well, she thought I'd get over it. (both laugh) She didn't take me seriously, and she didn't think I'd win. The odds were so heavily against me. Adams County had Quincy, Illinois, that was the big city. **But** I carried the other three counties.

DePue: How did you manage to do that?

Findley: First of all, I went to visit the circuit judge named A. Clay Williams, whose home was Pittsfield.[13] He was an old-timer, way up in his 80s, and he gave me advice on how to proceed. He said, "Be a good listener. Try to shake every hand you can, and build for tomorrow, so that you'll be better off for having been a candidate. Even if you lose, you would have gained acquaintance." That was good advice, and I really tried to proceed that way. I tried to avoid antagonizing anybody, including the two people running against me. I kept track of the people I talked to. I built up a card file.

DePue: You mentioned you tried to avoid antagonizing people, and yet, you're writing frequent editorials. Aren't you staking out a position and almost antagonizing people that way?

Findley: Yes. I'm sure I didn't avoid antagonizing, (both laugh) though I tried to. I was always courteous to them, civil and pleasant. When I met with the county Republican chairman, Claude Kent, in Quincy, and his committee men, we we're all at a supper, where the three candidates for nomination spoke. Afterwards, a banker from Pittsfield came to me. He said, "You said just the right things." (laughs) I said I would try to maintain the good service of…let's see now. I'm mixing up my congressional race now. I met all of the county chairmen, all the precinct committee men I could. I knew that I wasn't going to win their vote, but I wanted them to understand I was a serious candidate and would welcome any help.

I didn't take much time from my work as editor. I did campaigning on the weekend and evenings. I knew I was going to lose, but I was happy about the experience. This elderly judge [Judge Williams], a Democrat, of course, was flattered to be asked for advice, and he gave me some good advice,

[12] Lillian Schlagenhauf (1899-?) represented the 36th District in the Illinois Senate from 1953 to 1964.
[13] Prior to becoming circuit judge, A. Clay Williams (1868-1958) was in a law firm with his brother, William Elza Williams, who later served in the U.S. House of Representatives.

which, I think, was crucial. What I think is impressive is that Lillian Schlagenhauf, a few years later, publicly supported me for Congress, even though the state's attorney from Adams County was running against me. So Schlagenhauf was out front for me in the primary.

DePue: Did she win that senatorial campaign, then?

Findley: She was elected in '52 to the state senate. She did win that, but she supported me in my first Congressional race, and I won.

DePue: We're going to get to that not too far down the road. You've already said you didn't expect to win, so I guess you weren't disappointed when it didn't turn out that way.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: Were you surprised that you had done better than maybe a lot of people had thought?

Findley: One of my partners in the newspaper business, Dick Rowe, who was running for governor then, lost the nomination for governor the same day I lost the nomination for state Senate. He said, "You made a good campaign, and I hope you will try again later." He didn't try again later, but I did.

DePue: Did your newspaper, at that time, publicly support a Republican candidate for president? I would think Taft and Eisenhower would have the two top names on the ticket.

Findley: I personally came out—this was a little bit after the '52 race—and I was strong for Eisenhower, all the way through. I was the Ike candidate for state Senate, so I was a partisan for Ike. I had a great big poster of him that I put in our sort of large front window.

DePue: Was this, otherwise, Taft country?

Findley: Yes, very much so. I offended some Republicans, but when Ike got the nomination. He had such a huge vote that they saw him as the guy to go with.

DePue: So, that whole '52 experience didn't…Well, maybe Lucille hoped that it would end your political aspirations, but it probably just whetted your appetite.

Findley: (laughs) That's right. That's right. It did. Thanks to the help of the editor of the *Herald Whig* in Quincy, I got a press pass to the '52 nominating convention, which was held after the Illinois primary. I was defeated for the

nomination, but I, nevertheless, had the joy of going to the nominating convention in Chicago, at the stock yards arena. That's where it was held.[14]

DePue: This was the national convention?

Findley: Fifty-two, yeah. They had Earl Warren of California, (laughs) Richard Nixon of California. Everett Dirksen was sort of the pillar of Illinois Republicans.[15] Thomas Dewey was still running for president. And they said Douglas MacArthur waded ashore on Lake Michigan, because he was there, too.[16] (both laugh) So, it was quite a show.

DePue: This is heady stuff for a young newspaper guy.

Findley: Oh boy, it was. I forget the name of this giant hotel on the lakefront, but that's where a reception for Ike was held. This was '52. It's called the Hilton now.[17]

But the reception was a wild and enormous crowd. There was a lineup, behind a rope, filtering past Ike. It looked to me as if he was getting tired and would soon disappear, so I ducked under the rope. I don't know how many people I irritated, but I did. I got to shake hands with him, and he really impressed me. He made me feel like he was genuinely glad to meet me. That was quite a feeling. I was sure he was going to be president.

To go to a future moment, he was president for the first seventeen days of my congressional career. He turned it over to JFK on January the twentieth of '61. I was given the oath of office January the third. I met Ike twice during those seventeen days. He was very flattering. He liked what I said about farm policy. I was trying to get government out of the administration of crops in the U.S. I didn't think Uncle Sam needed to bother to tell farmers what to plant, (laughs) and my position was very popular then. He heard about what I was doing. During a breakfast at his home in Gettysburg, he was asked by a reporter if he agreed with Paul Findley's policy on farming, and he said, "You bet I do." (both laugh) So, Ike helped me, and I was out front supporting Ike's dreams for NATO. Ike eventually came to support federation. I've got letters here that show his public commitment to federation, but it didn't come to him until he left office.

DePue: Let's back up to 1952. You'd just lost an election that you had anticipated you'd lose. But, from that point on, were you just looking for opportunities that, maybe, you could be throwing your hat in the ring again?

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[14] The arena, named the International Amphitheatre, was adjacent to the stock yards.
[15] Everett Dirksen (1896-1969) represented the 16th Illinois District in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1933-1949. He served in the U.S. Senate, 1951-1969. He was a Taft supporter at the 1952 Republican National Convention and was an outspoken critic of Thomas Dewey's support of Eisenhower at the convention.
[16] Thomas E. Dewey (1902-1971) unsuccessfully ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 1940. He was the Republican presidential candidate in 1944 and 1948. He was not a candidate in 1952 but was influential in securing the nomination for Eisenhower at the 1952 Republican National Convention.
[17] The Stevens Hotel was renamed the Hilton in 1951.

Findley: No. I didn't think the chance would ever come to run for office again, because there were seasoned veterans, successful people in every office of interest to me. I really wasn't interested in the state legislature. I wanted to get to the big place.

DePue: So, your interest was more at the national level than state politics.

Findley: It was more at making a success in the newspaper. Thoughts of public office were in the back of my mind, but not in the forefront.

DePue: For the next several years, then, did you stay in Pittsfield?

Findley: Yes, stayed there until I was a member-elect of Congress.

DePue: I assume you and Lucille started a family about this timeframe, as well?

Findley: We did. Craig was born in '48, so he was four years old when I ran for state Senate. He'd go out with me on a few trips around Calhoun County. Calhoun County was a fascinating place.

DePue: It's kind of isolated from the rest of the state, isn't it?

Findley: It is. It's sometimes called the Kingdom of Calhoun. There is no railroad in the whole county. There was one bridge at Hardin. There were a couple of ferries, but the traffic from St. Louis hadn't developed by then.

DePue: For those who aren't familiar with the geography, it's sandwiched between the Illinois River and the Mississippi River.

Findley: The big flyway, yeah. The population of Calhoun County consisted of two elements. The Catholic Church was probably half of it. The rest was Protestantism, mainly critics of Catholics. So, there was almost open warfare within Calhoun County over religion (laughs). I survived nicely, because my wife was a Catholic, and I was a Presbyterian. (both laugh) So, I could listen to both sides and agree with both sides. Yeah, the campaign was really interesting. I met a lot of great people in that campaign. So, I followed the judge's advice and came out ahead.

DePue: Were you one of those guys who would keep careful notes of the people you met?

Findley: Oh, yeah. I didn't have quite as thorough a system as I did in the congressional campaign, but I did keep track of names and dates. I would often telephone them or stop to see them.

DePue: Congressman, do you have the politician's chief talent of remembering faces and names?

Findley: I did a lot better then, than today. (laughs) The card file helped. Before, I'd go into a town and I'd have the cards for that town, thumb through them, and that helped.

DePue: What, three by five cards or something?

Findley: Yeah. I followed that process, religiously, in 1960, and '59, when I first began my campaign. I kept a supply of blank cards in the right pocket. My cards filled out went in the left pocket.

DePue: But it sounds like, after the '52 campaign, you went back and were content to be a full-time journalist.

Findley: That's right. In fact, at one point, Lucille and I decided to sell the newspaper, if we could get a decent price, and travel, go to Europe and bang around, perhaps develop some work as a foreign correspondent. That was a big dream. It never materialized at all, but we thought about that. Then suddenly, the opportunity to run for Congress came along, and then we dropped the idea of selling.

DePue: You had another child somewhere in here too, I believe.

Findley: Yeah. Diane came six years later.

DePue: In what year was she born?

Findley: Fifty-four.

DePue: By that time, you're back full-time as a journalist again.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: This might be the right time to inject Abraham Lincoln into this story.

Findley: Well, it could be injected earlier, because I always considered him seriously as my friend, believe it or not. (laughs) He was always an inspiration.

DePue: You grew up with that.

Findley: I read Carl Sandburg's *Prairie Years,* I think, when I was in the fifth grade. One of the journeys that I enjoyed immensely was a trip to Springfield to visit the home and the tomb. Pike County attracted me greatly because of its numerous Lincoln connections. That was a common stop on his circuit-riding work, Pittsfield. A number of houses where he was known to have been entertained still stand today, probably more than exist in Springfield. It was really Lincoln country.

DePue: What was it about Lincoln that most appealed to you, especially as a youngster? I know you kept going back to him.

Findley: Well, I memorized some of his speeches when I was in high school. And when I was a student at Illinois College, they had literary societies. A good friend—handicapped a bit, older than the average—took me under his wing and signed me up for Phi Alpha literary society. [I've] got the certificate of membership there. (laughs) I would recite Lincoln speeches, most of the time, when I had a turn at the lectern.

DePue: So, something about his eloquence?

Findley: It was his eloquence, yes.

DePue: More than his politics, you think?

Findley: Well, they're together. They're one and the same. But his eloquence was just unbelievable. I must say I don't know how he attained it. He didn't go to school beyond the second grade. He did have a connection with former IC students at New Salem Village. And one of the great biographers of Lincoln,

David Herbert Donald, [1920-2009] in his greatest book of all, *The Life of Lincoln*, credited six New Salem villagers with really providing higher education to Lincoln. That was the closest to a college education he got, and it came from students from Illinois College.

DePue: I know that one of the things you wrote about in your biography was the photo drawing, (Findley laughs) kind of half between a…

Findley: Just before Gettysburg, Lincoln was photographed by Alexander Gardner in D.C., and one of the poses was Lincoln seated, with Nicolay seated on his right and John Hay standing on his left. According to photo historians, there were half a dozen prints of that made. John Nicolay acquired one of the prints, and he was so proud of it, he had what they called a miniaturist artist in D.C. tint the figures and paint in the background of the plain studio [as] the likeness of the cabinet room of the White House.

That painting became the property of his only child, Helen Nicolay. When she died, she left it to her housekeeper, who died a few days later and left it to the housekeeper's daughter, who was a school teacher up in New Hampshire. I knew of its existence, because there was a distant relative of the Nicolay family that still lived in Pittsfield, and they kept me up-to-date on happenings within the family. So, I knew the picture existed, and I knew where it was. So, one time, when we visited Stoughton, Mass, near Boston—which was at least once a year—I borrowed my father-in-law's car, drove up to Center Harbor, New Hampshire, and met the school teacher one evening, and asked if I could see the painting. She had it up in the attic.

DePue: It wasn't even on display.

Findley: No. She brought it down, and she had the desk that Nicolay used. What she did to that later, I don't know. But, I asked her if she'd consider selling it to me, because I wanted to display it in my newspaper office in Pittsfield. She said, "Well, I don't know what it's worth. I'm not sure I want to sell it, anyway." But I called up a guy named Meserve, who was, then, the most prominent Lincoln photo expert in the country, lived in New York.[18] For some stroke of luck, I got him on the phone right away, and I asked him what it would be worth. He said, well, he didn't know, without looking at it. But, he said, any print of Lincoln that was genuine was worth at least a hundred bucks. So, I offered the school teacher two hundred, (laughs) and then I added a few bucks for the telephone call to New York and got the painting. It was on my office wall until I went to Congress. I took it to Congress with me, of course.

DePue: The next part of the Lincoln story that so fascinated me, was your decision to go around to various civic groups, making speeches.

Findley: That was a product of my campaign needs. I needed a speech that any audience would welcome, because most audiences would want a nonpartisan talk.

DePue: So, now we're talking about 1959 timeframe?

Findley: It would have been earlier, probably '56 or '57. I had a copy of the book that Helen Nicolay wrote about her father, and the frontispiece was the text of a letter that Nicolay had written to the Bloomington Historical Society. In it, he listed the occasions on which he personally had heard speeches from Lincoln's lips. The first one was a convention at Bloomington, where the reporters were so enthralled with what Lincoln said, they supposedly didn't record it very well. (laughs) That was the first time he really spoke out very fervently about slavery.

Then, he heard Lincoln's "House Divided" speech in Representative Hall in Springfield one evening. When Lincoln was nominated, by then he had become acquainted with Nicolay, who was, then, Assistant to the Secretary of State in the capitol building. Lincoln would go down to look at election records quite often, and he got acquainted with Nicolay. So, he made Nicolay his first appointee to his campaign staff, his only one, actually. I think he paid him $60 a month.

Nicolay's job was to receive visitors, to write letters, to stay with Lincoln until he was elected. Lincoln didn't leave Springfield very much during the campaign, and he made very few speeches. So, Nicolay's job was

[18] Frederick Hill Meserve (1865-1962) was considered one of the foremost collectors of Lincoln photographs.

pretty delicate. I guess he did it very well, because, when Lincoln became president-elect, his first charter was to hire Nicolay as his secretary.

Before they left town, Nicolay convinced Lincoln that he needed help. So, he [Nicolay] recommended John Hay, a young man he had met in Pittsfield, and Lincoln agreed. So, both Nicolay and Hay were on the train with Lincoln. Nicolay heard the farewell to the Springfield citizens, probably his most frequently repeated speech.

When he got to Washington, he heard him give the First Inaugural. He was seated on the platform, just a couple of seats away.

When time for the Lincoln participation at Gettysburg came, Nicolay went with Lincoln to Gettysburg overnight, and stayed with him in the morning, until they went, at noontime, to the cemetery. Again, he sat near him during the Gettysburg Address. There's a photo that shows him.

Then he was present for the second inaugural. Imagine, one person being present for all of those utterances. I'm sure only one person ever had that privilege, and Nicolay was it.

I made a speech that tied all this together, and when I had come to the "House Divided" speech, I quoted a few paragraphs of it, and I quoted part of the other speeches that went along, all from memory. It never failed. (laughs) It wasn't an original idea.

I was in Rotary Club in Pittsfield, and I believe it was 1958. A visiting Rotarian from Pennsylvania, a professor, told me about an experience he had had in providing the program for the local Rotary Club some weeks earlier. He said he never gave a word of his own. All he did was to read from speeches of Abraham Lincoln. He said the crowd was silent, and they stood and applauded afterwards. So, that's how I got the idea (laughs) of using Nicolay's experience as a dramatic, personal story about Lincoln, that wouldn't hurt me a bit as a candidate. So, that was my main speech in getting the nomination.

I had a couple of other speeches. One was on inflation, and I've still got that speech. One was on the constitutional convention. All three of them did pretty well with an audience. I never had any complaints, and most of the crowds were on their feet clapping.

DePue: The constitutional convention you're talking about is the U.S. Constitutional Convention?

Findley: Yeah. And when I had a group audience, I tried to get the names of those who heard me, so that quickly enlarged my card file.

DePue: As I understand—again from the book—you were doing this before you had made any kind of formal declaration.

Findley: Oh, that's right. In fact, I was so grateful to Abe Lincoln, because the speech was welcomed by any audience. The word about the success of my speech traveled pretty well. I got the Rotary Club secretary to write to all the Rotary Clubs in the twentieth district on my behalf, which he did. Lions Club did the same thing. So, the word got around fast, and nobody was ever offended. In fact, I got to deliver the entire speech on primetime TV from Quincy. It was a daytime appearance, but it was, nevertheless, a big audience. That helped a lot.

DePue: Are there parts of the speech that you remember to this day?

Findley: I could recite almost all of it.

DePue: Any part that you'd like to recite for maybe a few seconds for us?

Findley: (pauses) "Well, if we could know where we are, and whither we are tending, we would better know what to do, and how to do it. Our nation is a house divided against itself. I believe it cannot survive half free and half slave. I do believe that it will become all one thing or the other."[19]

"Dear friends, no one, not in my position, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and to the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived for a quarter century, and I've gone from a young to an old man. Here my children were born, and one lies buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return. Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well."[20] Is that enough? (both laugh)

DePue: Very impressive. I'd stand, if I wasn't wired here. (both laugh) I can see the appeal there. And the nice part about that, you don't have to stake claim to any particular contentious position.

Findley: That's right. Lincoln's stories helped me immensely. I forget what I was trying to avoid, but at the time I said, "Well, this reminds me of a story that Lincoln told about a farmer who had a big trunk of a tree, dead tree, in the center of the field. And it was too green to burn. It was too twisted to split, and it was too heavy to haul away. What did he do? He plowed around it." (both laugh) And generally, that would entertain the audience enough, they'd forgotten what they asked me. (both laugh)

[19] This quotation is from Lincoln's "House Divided" speech, delivered in Springfield, Illinois on June 16, 1858.
[20] This quotation is from Lincoln's "Farewell Address to Springfield," delivered in Springfield, Illinois on February 11, 1861.

DePue: This is an aside, altogether, but, of course, Steven Spielberg just came out with his own movie on Lincoln.

Findley: Wonderful, it was wonderful.

DePue: So, you would recommend that to anybody, it sounds like.

Findley: I sure would. "With malice towards none, with charity for all"—no, that's not the start. "Fondly do I hope, fervently do I pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away."[21] You know this was presented completely in that movie. And I recited the whole thing. That was the best part of my speech. (laughs)

DePue: There's a couple other connections here. We'll get to the election in a bit, but it sounds like Lincoln had an awful lot to do with your winning that election.

Findley: Oh, sure.

DePue: I'm looking over to my left, here, and I'm seeing this couch, as well. Tell us about the couch.

Findley: I'm not sure the date the couch came to me. I think it was 1974 or thereabouts.[22] My addiction to Lincoln was well-known, and when the Pennsylvania Historical Society had a bunch of fragments of furniture, as well as complete furniture, they wanted to sell to the National Park System for display in the Lincoln home in Springfield, they came to me. I wrote a letter, I guess, on their behalf, but they credited me with helping to find a market. Their society was in tough straits, needed money. And they offered, as a little thank you, to let me buy the Lincoln sofa. They'd give me three years to pay. So, their offer of the sofa for $6,000, I grabbed. In fact, I agreed to it before I told Lucille. She heard about it on the radio in D.C. (both laugh)

DePue: And you heard about it, maybe, when you got home?

Findley: That's right. (both laugh) But, she liked the idea of owning it. I had agreed to keep it in a place where the public could view it, and that was what happened on the Hill. I had it in my office, but I had a pretty good flow of visitors all the time. I was waiting for the perfect spot, and when this came into being, I chose this.

DePue: Well, there are some more Lincoln stories, but we're going to wait until after you're in Congress to talk about those. I did want to spend the rest of the time we have today talking about that first election. I think we need to start in 1958, don't we?

[21] These quotations are from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, delivered on March 4, 1865.
[22] Findley acquired the couch in 1978.

Findley: Yes. That was the year that Sid Simpson agreed to speak in Pittsfield at a commemoration of an expansion of the local hospital. It was a big event for Pittsfield. I invited Sid Simpson to come and speak, and he did. After I introduced him, I stepped off the platform and got a chair below, so I could have a better audience hearing of him.

DePue: Who was he?

Findley: He was the twentieth district member for the House, a Republican.[23]

DePue: A U.S. House representative.

Findley: Yes. He was a congressman. He had been in office sixteen years. There are lots of rather unusual events in my life, but this was truly exceptional. I invited him to come. He came. I introduced him, which was a welcome opportunity.

It was 1958. I knew he would be reelected easily, and so did he. He gave his talk, with me in the audience. I had left the platform to be down below. And then, he sat down. His head slumped over to the side, and he died, right on the platform. It was right on the hospital lawn, so they took him right into the emergency room. They couldn't revive him. It was in October of '58. [The] election was right around the corner, and the party asked his widow if she'd be willing to serve. At first, she said, no, but then, she decided she ought to. So, her name, I think, was put on the ballots by running the ballots through a mimeograph machine. (laughs) She was elected, of course.

As soon as she got to Washington, somebody asked her about her plans for reelection. She hadn't even taken the oath by then. She said she'd just serve the one term. She didn't want to stay.[24] Well, that was notice to me and three other people to get going, (laughs) because that meant the seat would be open.

DePue: When you say "notice to you and three others," all Republicans?

Findley: Yes, yes. They were all seeking the nomination.

DePue: Were you already doing this Lincoln speech around the circuit?

Findley: No, no.

DePue: So, this happened afterward.

Findley: That's right. As soon as that evening at home, I told Lucille that this might be one time in a lifetime to run for Congress. She later said that she was sure I'd

[23] Sidney Elmer Simpson (1894-1958) served in Congress from 1943, until his death in 1958.
[24] Edna Oakes Simpson (1891-1894) served in Congress from 1959 to 1961.

get over it with a good night's sleep, (both laugh) but I didn't. I had to hit the trail before Edna Simpson had decided to run. I visited every county chairman. Of course, I didn't pursue it once she decided to run. But they knew me, anyhow. The next time around, I at least had established my name, to that degree.

DePue: In your first run, you said in 1952 you spent $300 running for the state Senate. By this time, it had to occur to you, this is going to be much more expensive than $300.

Findley: (laughs) I believe that I spent $9,000 to get the nomination. It wasn't all my money. I remember Kenneth Stark, a banker, who later joined my staff for a while, gave me $200. Bill Stratton, who was…let's see.

Paul Findley's 1st race for the U.S. Congress in 1960.

DePue: Stratton was governor at that time.

Findley: He gave me $200. I was quite surprised, because he was kind of under attack at that time over a portrait expenditure. Do you remember? He was on a trial about the use of campaign funds.

DePue: I knew that he had an issue that dealt with corruption in his office. I don't know the specifics of it.

Findley: Well, there was a trial, and Everett Dirksen testified in his behalf. But, during that trial period he came to a reception for me and gave me $200, and I was astounded at that.

DePue: Was this about the same timeframe you decided to purchase outright the newspaper?

Findley: Yes. I'm not sure of the dates, but suddenly, my partners wanted to sell. I did not get along with one of the partners, namely the widow of a former owner of the *Pike County Republican*. I think she planted a few seeds of doubt with my other partners. For whatever reason, they wanted to get out. So, I suddenly had the need to raise about…$20,000 sticks in my mind, but I'm not positive. As I considered that, I felt sure that my in-laws and my mother would loan me some, but it wouldn't be a great deal. I needed to get a bigger bunch of dollars. The only thing I owned that I could sell was the Lincoln picture.

Before, when I first acquired it, I received a letter from John Hay Whitney, the descendent of John Hay. He was, then, the owner of the *New York Herald Tribune* and also the ex-ambassador in London. He said, "If you ever decide to sell it, please let me know. I'd be interested in buying." I filed that away and thought I'd never use it. But, here was a time I should. So, I got in touch with him and did a little horse trading and finally got him to pay $8,500 for it.

DePue: That's quite a markup from $200.

Findley: It sure was, and it proved: here again, Abe Lincoln helped me. (both laugh) I know that I never would have made it to Congress, except for Abe. (laughs)

DePue: But what's the rationale for spending that kind of money to own, outright, the newspaper, when you know you're going to get into an expensive campaign?

Findley: Because I had no chance to get nominated unless I devoted full time to the campaign. I couldn't expect my partners to have their employee, me, spending all my time trying to get votes.

DePue: That would suggest there was somebody at the newspaper you could rely on to run the operation.

Findley: Well, I had very good help. I just left it to them to handle, and they did it. Amazing, amazing story. But, this money from John Hay Whitney enabled me to buy them out. They wanted out. I guess they were up to the point of asking me to sell to them, and I didn't want to do that. It never was expressed to me, but I'm sure that would have been the next step. If they wanted out, and I wouldn't buy them out, they would get me out otherwise.

DePue: That sounds like what we're talking about happened in 1959, then, about that timeframe?

Findley: Probably '58. It would have been awfully close.

DePue: Well, '58 would have been the election when Edna Simpson was first elected.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: So, did you pretty much run for two years for that position?

Findley: Oh, yeah. I knew I had to, and I did. I did very little at the *Pike County Republican* office.

DePue: Now, you already mentioned Lucille thought you'd get it out of your system. (both laugh) Somewhere along the line, she decided that, well, I think he's committed to this.

Findley: And when I was elected, they weren't happy at all.

DePue: They being the family?

Findley: Lucille and the kids. They were being required to pull up stakes from the whole life they had known. Craig was in junior high. Diane was ready for first grade. Lucille had had a terrible illness, an aftermath of Diane's birth. The doctors left a sponge inside when they performed the cesarean, and she had an agonizing time in '64, '65…

DePue: '55, '56

Findley: Yeah, yeah. And she was not in good health. I think she suffered from the menopause. Things were very, very tough between us. She was really having a bad time. I remember, it was Christmas Eve, and I ran into her, to my surprise, in the shopping district one day. Her closest friend, Kay Aiken, a native of New Zealand who had married a local man, had persuaded her to get out of the house and come with her to do some Christmas shopping. I remember, I got a pretty tough glare. She was very unhappy with life.

DePue: You couldn't have been spending a whole lot of time at home, with your ambitions and the newspaper.

Findley: That's right. I had abandoned them, as well as the newspaper, but I saw it as a lifetime opportunity. Lucille, soon after that, recovered her stability and was happy, but the kids were not happy. Craig had just a minor part in a school play, so he stayed over into the second semester partways to do that. Diane wanted to enter the first grade, as she would have in Pittsfield, but the local schools had a rule that would have required her to wait a year. That really tore her to pieces. I'm not sure what excuse they got for an exception, but she was permitted to go to a private school for first grade and thus be eligible to get in public school in the second. That's how it sorted out. So, family problems were at a peak.

DePue: You mentioned also—you alluded at least—that you had a crowded primary field.

Findley: Oh, yes. Oh, sure. The state's attorney of Jacksonville, Albert Hall—a very popular guy; I liked him—he was seeking it. A young fellow named Clyde Baulos of Bluffs, who had had a liaison job in the White House for a while, also wanted it. And then, the state's attorney of Adams County, Alvin Ufkes, he wanted it. So, the two big population centers had their own favorite son running. I had a tough sell. But that's why I dug into it with both feet. I knew I had to give it everything I had.

DePue: Was there any particular issue that summed up the primary campaign?

Findley: I based mine heavily on inflation. I thought the public debt that Washington was running was intolerable. I delivered a speech, "The worst tax of all, namely, inflation." I treat inflation as a tax, a hidden tax. Albert Hall took exception to that and made the mistake of contesting my little speech on that subject, instead of doing something for himself. Alvin Ufkes was sort of an aloof figure who, I believe, was certain he was going to get nominated, because he is state's attorney in the biggest county, Adams.

I never crossed swords with any of them. I tried to keep comity all the way through. I did have the advantage of being first on the ballot out of the four. I think Charlie Carpentier helped me get that, after I had made my call on him earlier. I used the slogan, "First man on the ballot, best man for the office" or something like that.

DePue: What was Carpentier's position at that time?

Findley: He was quietly for me.

DePue: Didn't he have a position?

Findley: He was Secretary of State. He held that office without a single bit of scandal, the last one to do that.

DePue: (laughs) For a while, at least. Did Paul Powell take it over after him, or was that a little bit later?

Findley: It seems to me that was Powell.[25]

DePue: Yeah, okay. You don't need to go down that road. (both laugh)

Findley: Shoebox Powell. Let me tell you about Shoebox Powell. (laughs) He liked ladies. There was a dinner, honoring some woman who was queen of something or other, statewide office. I was invited to go and so was Paul Powell. I saw him rearranging nameplates at the speaker's table, so he could be next to the lady of honor. He was a man of detail. (both laugh) When he died, one of the cynics who had fun with his death, said that they heard that the cause of death was the day he opened a shoebox and found shoes in them, had a heart attack. (both laugh)

DePue: You're obviously talking about a piece of famous Illinois lore about his death and finding hundreds of thousands of dollars in his apartment at the St. Nicholas Hotel in Springfield.

Findley: That's right. (laughs)

[25] Paul Powell (1902-1970) served as speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives from 1949-1951 and 1959-1963. He was Secretary of State for Illinois from 1965, until his death in 1970.

DePue: Let's get back to you and your campaign. I want to read the figures here, because you've got them in the book: Findley, 12,157; Albert Hall, 8,062; Alvin Ufkes, 6,177; and Clyde Baulos, 5,292. So, you had four legitimate candidates.

Findley: Yeah, yeah, they were serious.

DePue: Who was your general election opponent, then? Who was the Democrat?

Findley: Montgomery Carrott. He was the General Motors dealer in Quincy, a dealer for Chevrolet, I know, maybe for the others, too. But he was a very successful businessman, and he had a lot of friends.

DePue: It's time you talk a little about the twentieth district, at that time, for that first race. Describe that district for us.

Findley: (pause) I'm not positive about the number of counties, but I think it was up around twenty.

DePue: Well, while you're talking, I'll go ahead and count them here real quick.

Findley: Okay. It was agricultural to a great extent. Sangamon County was not in the district. Quincy, even though it had some heavy industry, was still heavily agricultural.

DePue: There are fourteen counties.

Findley: Fourteen. The eastern counties were Mason and Menard. Mason was a desolate county. Really, there wasn't a city in Mason that was on the upswing. Menard had Petersburg. It was a very live county and generally Republican. The other counties sorted out as pretty even between Republicans and Democrats. no heavy majority either way. I think it was regarded as Democratic, but not by very much.

The countryside was festooned with billboards sponsored by the John Birch Society. The Birch Society was well represented in Quincy. They had some very ardent supporters there. Believing I should keep in touch with every element of the party, I always was glad to meet with them and talk to them. There was some common ground. I was then very conservative, opposed to any enlargement of federal authority, which suited them fine. Their attitude on foreign policy was terrible, but I didn't use that word.

There was very, very little in the way of minorities in the district. It was very white. The Jewish presence at that time wasn't notable in any county. Sangamon County was not in my district. There were a lot of Jews in Quincy, professionals, mainly. There were not a great number of blacks. Calhoun County, for example, had the tradition of not letting blacks stay in the county overnight. That was still alive. Pike County had had blacks coming

and going, but not very many. When I lived there, I was aware of only one black person in Pittsfield or anyplace else in the county. He was a janitor type that took care of both banks (laughs), a nice guy, and he took a lot of punishment, jokes. The minstrel show has always portrayed blacks in a demeaning way, which I disapproved.

DePue: The economics of the district were primarily agricultural?

Findley: When I was in college I did a little economic survey, and I found that Morgan County was evenly divided. One-third institutional; we had big institutions for the deaf, blind and insane, at the time. One-third was agricultural. One-third was industrial. So, I considered it a nicely balanced economy. It wasn't true of the whole district, but the other parts of the district didn't go too far from that.

DePue: Was the area that you were representing—I think this is included—prime farmland?

Findley: Yes. Scott County and Morgan and especially the river bottom-land.

DePue: Around the Illinois River.

Findley: That was really prime. I had a lot of river bottoms. Some people, later on, would describe the twentieth district as the drainage district, because I had so many drainage district projects. (both laugh) I was always meeting with the Corps of Engineers.

DePue: Now, you mentioned a couple of the issues. The prime issues, though, that were discussed—once you got to the general election—what were those? And this would have been the same election year of JFK [John Fitzgerald Kennedy] and [Richard] Nixon.

Findley: JFK, yeah. Of course, their election overshadowed mine. I was on TV on WGEM for one hour, with Montgomery Carrott, in advance of each of the debates that Kennedy had with Nixon. So, we had big audiences. I wasn't overly comfortable under the Klieg lights,[26] but I was able to make some good points. I didn't cause a problem, and I think that's probably a good outcome for any debate. (laughs)

DePue: Were you able to weave in any Lincoln in any of those debates?

Findley: I gave my Lincoln speeches whenever I had the opportunity, and I did have regular opportunities. TV channel, the Quincy channel…seven, I believe…no, ten, ten. I talked about inflation. I talked about the constitutional convention, talked about Lincoln. I didn't see it important to focus on big national or international issues, and I didn't. I talked about service to constituents, the

[26] An intense, carbon arc lamp, especially used in filmmaking. It is named after inventor John H. Kliegl.

importance of having a representative in Congress who would take an interest in people that had problems with the federal government. They'd had good service, and I wanted to continue that. That was usually what I talked about.

DePue: So, it sounds like, to a certain extent, you were deemphasizing the issues in the general election.

Findley: Yes, except for inflation. My speech on the Constitutional Convention touched patriotic issues very often. I think the district found it refreshing to have comments of a nonpartisan nature from candidates running for office.

DePue: Now, if I can find it quickly, I know there is one quote that your opponent misapplied to you that you used for good effect. Oh, here it is. "The family farm is a thing of the past." That's what Carrott said you had declared in a speech.

Findley: (laughs) Yeah, that was a fun part of the campaign, because I had said something close to that, but it was out of context. He didn't quote what followed, in which I said, "The family farm of that era is out of touch, but now we have a larger unit that's still a family farm, and I want to protect the interest of that larger unit." A thousand-acre farm was commonplace, and I wanted to protect the farm from intrusions by federal policy wherever I could. The farmers then liked it. Of course, now, they've all been getting a treasury check every year, so they're used to it. (laughs)

DePue: We're going to talk about farm policy the next time we get together and talk about your congressional career. As you got close to Election Day, were you confident of victory?

Findley: Yes. I wasn't assured, but I felt good. I felt I had done all I could possibly do to get the job. I'd had good support. I developed sort of a personal party of my own, and I had overcome the criticism that the established parties made to me about that. I convinced them that I was bringing new people into the party. I wasn't trying to reduce the importance of the party establishment.

DePue: Is that to say that you didn't come up through the political ranks, like the party expected you to?

Findley: You know, they probably voiced that criticism among themselves, but I never heard it. The party wanted me to win, even though they had some misgivings about me.

DePue: Did you feel like you had the party regular support in the primary?

Findley: No, no. I had no endorsements. The Pike County Republican Party may have endorsed me, but I don't believe so. The others stayed out of the primaries.

DePue: Tell me what the feeling was like, then, the night of the election, when you found out you had won, after you'd had practically eight years of striving for that goal.

Findley: Well, it was disbelief. I had visited Washington when I was in high school, and I looked down from the gallery and thought how grand it must be to be a part of this, (laughs) but I never believed I'd ever make it. (pause) I was excited, but I had this problem with Lucille at the very same time. She was very distraught. Menopause can be devastating, I think, and she was really, heavily under that. But Lucille and I made a trip by ourselves to Washington, after Election Day. We found a house we could rent, and she and I met with Erland Erickson, who was, by then, a Presbyterian preacher in Falls Church, Virginia. She had known Erland, through my friendship with him, all through our marriage. She had been with the Erickson family, and she liked them very much. That helped greatly. In fact, Erickson reshuffled his own house to make room for us to store some furniture that we couldn't use immediately.

DePue: Well congressman, that might be a good place for us to finish today, unless you've got one or two comments to close this out for today.

Findley: I could recite the rest of my speech. (both laugh)

DePue: So, next time we're going to talk about those early years in Congress, and not just for you. Those are active years for the United States. You've got the JFK years, and then, of course, you've got the Johnson and the Great Society and all the things that he was doing, plus foreign affairs.

Moving to Washington, DC in 1961 in their 1955 Oldsmobile are (l-r) Craig, Diane, Lucille and Paul Findley.

Findley: Vietnam, start to finish, the wars.

DePue: Yeah, so we've got a lot of terrain to cover next time.

Findley: It's mostly about war.

DePue: Thanks very much, Congressman.

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Interview #3: February 8, 2013
Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Friday, February 8, 2013. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. I am, once again, over at the Illinois College campus in Jacksonville, Illinois, sitting across the table from Congressman Findley. How are you today, congressman?

Findley: Fine, just fine.

DePue: This is our third session. When we left off last time, as you'll recall, you'd just gotten to Washington, D.C. You'd won the election. You talked about the challenge of finding a place to live and the challenges for the family. So, now we can dive right into your freshman years as a congressman, that first term. This was 1961, when you arrived, correct? I think what I'd like to have you start with is tell us about the House of Representatives in those days. How would you describe it?

Findley: (pause) Well, I have always viewed it as the people's branch of government, the only place where our forefathers intended the officials of government to be directly elected by the people. The Senate was chosen by the state legislatures, the president by the Electoral College, but the House was by direct vote. I knew I was a lucky guy, because so few people ever get to that place. And I knew it was close to the center of power, not that I would be powerful, but the institution that I would be in would have immense power, and always has had it—not always utilized very well, but it's always been available.

DePue: How were freshmen representatives expected to act?

Findley: Sam Rayburn was Speaker of the House then.[27] He was kind of a crusty old guy, but I got along with him great. In fact, he died during my first year in the House. He didn't give me advice. I didn't ask for it, and he didn't volunteer it. But, he told many new members of the House, "To get along, you have to go along." In other words, don't make waves. Just fit in and follow the leadership and draw your pay.

DePue: Did you follow that advice?

Findley: Never did, never did. (both laugh) I knew that it was very difficult to even get one term in the House, and I had no reason to believe that I'd be reelected. I soon learned that my district would be merged by a district representative, by a very popular Democrat, so I figured I had to get everything done that I could reasonably hope to during those first two years, and I behaved that way.

DePue: We're going to talk about redistricting later on, because that's a big part of the story about your election in '62. But can you recall who the other Illinois delegates were—both in the House and the Senate—at that time, names that would stick out to us today?

Findley: Dirksen was in the Senate.[28] Les Arends was the venerable whip of the House Republicans.[29] Charlie Halleck was the leader of the House Republicans.[30]

Findley: Halleck was from Indiana. He and Dirksen put on what they called the "Ev and Charlie Show" for the news media, once a week. I became very close to Halleck early in the session, because he gave me the privilege of offering the recommittal motion on the first major farm bill that Kennedy tried to get through. By then he knew that I was going to face tough competition the next go around, so he gave me the break. I was on the House Ag Committee. I was one of four Republicans appointed that year. We drew straws to see who would occupy the first seat, and I got it. I was seated next to Bob Dole.[31] He got second.

DePue: He was a freshman that year, as well, then?

Findley: Yes. We sat together, side-by-side for—I believe—four years. It was a great experience for me.

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[27] Samuel T. Rayburn (D) represented Texas's Fourth District from 1913-1961. He was House majority leader 1937-1940 and House minority leader 1947-1949 and 1953-1955. He served as speaker of the House three times: 1940-1947, 1949-1953, and 1955-1961.

[28] Everett Dirksen (R) served as a senator from Illinois from 1951 to 1969. He had previously served as the representative of the 16th Illinois District, from 1933 to 1949.

[29] Leslie Arends represented the Seventeenth Illinois District from 1935 to 1973 and the Fifteenth Illinois District from 1973 to 1974. He was the Republican whip from 1943 to 1974.

[30] Charles Halleck represented the Second Indiana District from 1935 to 1969. He was House majority leader from 1947 to 1949 and 1953 to 1955. He served as House minority leader from 1959 to 1965.

[31] Robert Dole represented the Sixth Kansas District from 1961 to 1963 and the First Kansas District from 1963 to 1969. He served as a senator from Kansas from 1969 to 1996.

DePue: You mentioned the Ag Committee. Was that a committee that you sought to sit on?

Findley: Yes, I did. It was a great benefit to me for several years. Agriculture was focused in Illinois. Illinois was the preeminent agricultural producer, in my book—very diverse products, a strong tradition of leadership. Charlie Shuman was head of the Illinois Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation.[32] He was an Illinoisan and had held that position for a long time. He was succeeded by Bill Kufus, who was also an Illinoisan. So, Illinoisan people tended to dominate agriculture.

And it was a curiosity that, despite the importance of Illinois to agriculture, nationally I was the only member of the House of Congress, House or Senate, that was on an Ag Committee for several years. I was by myself, so I was the one that a lot of reporters went to for comment about items close to farmers. I would not have been sought out had there been two or three others on the committee from Illinois or from the Senate. Nobody in the Senate was on the Senate Ag Committee. So, I fell into opportunity just because I was the only one.

DePue: Do you recall if there was anybody from Iowa, because that was the other state that, I think, we rivaled in the production of corn and soybeans, cattle, hogs, et cetera.

Findley: Oh, yeah. Yeah, Iowa was always well represented. Let's see, there was a venerable member. (laughs) I wish I could recall his name. He always began every speech on the House floor, with these words, "I'd just like to say this…" That always preceded any other comment he had. (laughs) He was stuck on that intro, and we kind of made fun of it.

DePue: My congressman, growing up, was H.R. Gross.[33]

Findley: Oh, yes. H.R. was a powerhouse. He was the self-appointed guardian of the Constitution. He was always on his feet, challenging anyplace he could, what was happening, demanding recorded votes, raising questions, making parliamentary inquiries. He was against everything. (laughs) I don't recall he ever cast an affirmative vote, but he was a good influence. He became so popular that, when he retired, believe it or not, members of the House—Democrat and Republican— chipped in to buy him and his wife a free ticket to Paris for a holiday. He was always criticizing people that went on junkets, especially to Paris. (laughs)

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[32] Charles Shuman was a farmer from Sullivan, Illinois who earned a master's degree from the University of Illinois, College of Agriculture in 1929. He served on the Illinois Agricultural Association Board as a member from 1940 to 1945 and president from 1945 to 1954. He was president of the American Farm Bureau Federation from 1954 to 1970. See his oral history memoir at http://library.uis.edu/archives/collections/oral/pdf/SHUMAN.pdf.

[33] Harold Royce Gross (R) represented the Third Iowa District from1949 to 1975.

DePue: That it is interesting. I was from Waverly, Iowa, and he was from that district. The term I always recall, with him, is "the watchdog of the treasury."

Findley: That's right; he was. But there was an interesting subset to that. We had what was called an account, from which you could buy pencils and erasers and all kinds of stuff. What was the name of it? Well, I'll come up with that later, I'm sure. Anyhow, when he retired, he had a buildup of money in that account of $25,000, which he was able to take as personal income. (both laugh) So, he wasn't too fussy about the treasury in that instance.

DePue: Getting back, I wondered what committee assignments you wanted when you first got there.

Findley: Well, I'm sure I asked for foreign affairs.

DePue: Which would have been one of the plum assignments, I assume.

Findley: I viewed it as one that I wanted, because I was determined to do all I could to prevent war, a mild ambition. I had no trouble getting on it. I could have moved off Ag to get it for my second term, but I chose not to do it that soon. Later, I did vacate my House Ag seat for four years, but I was able, after four years, to return to the Ag Committee and retain foreign affairs, too. So, I had my two choice committees, eventually but not immediately.

DePue: Were you serving on any other committees that first term?

Findley: Early in my career I was on the Education and Labor Committee, headed by Adam Clayton Powell.[34]

DePue: From New York, I believe.

Findley: Yes, that's right, from New York City. He was very controversial and left under a rather large cloud.

DePue: Was he impeached, or what would the term be? I know there was an ethical challenge.

Findley: I should remember, but I don't. I know he left.[35]

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[34] Adam Clayton Powell represented the Twenty-second New York District from 1945 to 1953, the Sixteenth New York from 1953 to 1963, and the Eighteenth New York from 1963 to 1971.

[35] Powell was named chair of the Committee on Education and Labor in 1961, a position he held until 1967. However, personal problems began to cloud his Congressional service in the early 1960s. In 1963, Powell refused to pay a slander judgment in New York. The case lasted several years and, in order to avoid arrest, Powell appeared very infrequently in his Harlem district. The House Democratic Caucus stripped him of his chairmanship in 1967, and the full House called for a Judiciary Committee investigation. The committee recommended censure, a fine, a loss of seniority, but the House voted instead to exclude him from the 90th Congress (1967-1969). Powell was re-elected by his district but refused to take his seat and spent most of the term in the Bahamas. After his re-election in 1968, the House fined him and voted to deny him seniority.

Findley: But I enjoyed my brief stint there, and I came to respect Powell. He was always fair as a chairman. He was domineering; he ran the show, and he welcomed opportunities to kind of grind in the dust, white people. He was a black and proud of it. He had been kicked around a lot in early years, and all his life, I'm sure. But my personal experience with him was harmonious all the way through. I came to admire him.

I didn't stay on the committee very long, maybe four years. Then, I also had a brief stint on the Government Operations Committee. I think I was there the first time, when Nixon became president, and I was there for several terms. But, when the opportunity came along that I could have Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, I dropped the others. In fact, being on more than one committee is really not ideal. Everybody sought multiple appointments, and they got them. But, the House would have been better off if it'd been much more disciplined on how many they passed out.

DePue: I assume the Democrats had the majority in the House when you got there. Who was the minority leader at the time?

Findley: I think the first one was a man name Dague, from Pennsylvania, D-a-g-u-e.[36] Then, he retired voluntarily, and Page Belcher of Oklahoma became the senior Republican. I got in hot water with him.[37] (laughs)

DePue: I want to go back to your first committee assignment in agriculture and ask you specifically what your philosophy was, what policies you would want to have pursued at the time.

Findley: My goal was to get government out of the management of farms, and I never deviated from that. Even though I lost most of my campaigns, within the committee I won quite a few. I got through an amendment to the Food Stamp Act, which authorized a pilot study of converting it from welfare to workfare, under which the people benefiting from food stamps would be required to work off the value of the stamps in some public service for the community or the local government or the county government.

And San Diego, fortunately, was willing to have an experiment of that type. I went to San Diego to observe how it was working and found it was working great. People that were under that were finding jobs as a result of that requirement of work. But, I also found that two-thirds of the people eligible

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Even though the Supreme Court ruled in 1969 that he had been unconstitutionally excluded from the 90th Congress, his constituents had apparently tired of Powell's controversies. He was defeated in the Democratic primary in 1970. See the United States House of Representatives discussion at http://history.house.gov/People/Listing/P/POWELL,-Adam-Clayton,-Jr--(P000477)/

[36] Paul Dague (R) represented the Ninth Pennsylvania District from 1947 to 1966.

[37] Page Belcher (R) represented the Eighth Oklahoma District from 1951 to 1953 and the First Oklahoma District from 1953 to 1973.

turned down food stamps, rather than work. So, they were very selective about working.

DePue: What was your view about subsidies, then?

Findley: I opposed most of them. I thought the least offensive programs were the ones that Farm Bureau supported, which was land retirement, taking land out of production, but leaving the farmer free to do whatever he wanted to do with the remaining acres. I didn't like the feed grains proposal that Kennedy made. And, by the way, that recommittal motion of mine prevailed by ten votes. It was the first setback that Kennedy had on the Hill. Everything else went through.

DePue: Can you describe what you mean by recommittal vote and what the issue was?

Findley: Well, the last step in the process of the committee, of the whole—which was the whole membership of the House—was to have the option for the minority to offer a motion to send the whole thing back to committee, to do nothing further, not to have a final vote on it. When the option came, the moment came, the Republican leader had control of who made the motion, and he chose me. It was a real break, because some of the media interpreted that as a great, stellar achievement on my part. All I did was to grab the opportunity that Halleck gave me, but I looked good. (laughs) It created good press, because most of my farmers, at that point, were pretty hostile to government management of commodities. They'll go along with land retirement, but not to interfere with what they're going to plant.

DePue: Did that mean that, if they had removed the subsidies for corn and soybeans, et cetera, that they would have done fine, even letting the market set the price of these things?

Findley: I argued that. We never quite got to that point, because, I recall, a member of the Ag Committee—a very senior member—Clifford, Clifford, Clifford…his last name was Clifford. He was from Maine. He told me that he had observed that, if a farmer got a check from the treasury for $100 the first of January, and then, he got another one the first of February, by then, he would feel that he couldn't live without it, that he got hooked on government checks. (laughs) And that's what's happened to them, since I became a member.

I really had pretty good results in my endeavors. One of them was to try to limit the total number of dollars that any farmer could get in the way of payment for compliance with food controls, and generally pegged the amount at $5,000, which was pretty skimpy. Several of my amendments, at $20,000, did sail through, but farmers have the great skill at bypassing limitations like that. All they had to do was split up the farm into two parts, one that their wife owned, the other one that they owned. (laughs) Therefore, they could get part of the limitation laws for each of them.

DePue: How did that work? If they got a payment from the government, they were setting aside some of their land, not to grow corn or soybeans?

Findley: No, they were getting paid for complying with the regulations. They would have to get permission from the government on what they planted, how much they devoted to corn or to wheat or other commodities.

DePue: Then, they could use that land for something else?

Findley: Some other purpose, sure, and they did. Now, they get enormous sums every year. It's just a scandal. But it is such a small part of the total budget that they don't get the attention they once did.

DePue: How well did you know Charles Shuman?

Findley: Well, in candor, I never heard of him before I got elected. But, he took a great interest in my role as the only one from Illinois on the Hill dealing with the committee. When I wrote a book called, *The Federal Farm Fable*, in '68, he wrote the introduction to it.

I had a very, very able guy named Steven Jones. He was my assistant on two different periods of time in my tenure.[38] This was in the early days of my first term with Steve as my assistant. And he had a friend from college days, a woman that he thought would probably put together the text of a book, which she did. I gave her a little guidance here and there. But, each chapter was headed by an Aesop Fable, and so, *The Federal Farm Fable* was the title of the book. A very conservative publishing organization published it. They printed two thousand copies. They all sold, but they didn't republish. It was my first success at book publishing.

I have to thank Steve Jones for putting the pieces together. What he did was to collect all the articles I had written. I would write weekly articles for my home district about agriculture, and this woman was able to pick parts of those together. It required very little original composition.

DePue: Now, getting back to Shuman—correct me if I'm wrong—but my understanding is, he was pretty high profile. And again, he was the American Farm Bureau president.

Findley: Yes, he was president of the American Farm Bureau Federation and very popular. He was very conservative. He may have been a bit more conservative than I was, not much. (laughs)

[38] Stephen Jones (1940-) served as Findley's administrative assistant from 1966 to 1969. A lawyer in Oklahoma, Jones also served as an assistant to Richard Nixon (1964), a member of the U.S. delegation to NATO (1968), and judge of Temporary Division, Oklahoma Court of Appeals (1982). Jones was the lead defense lawyer for Timothy McVeigh during his trial for the 1995 Oklahoma City bombings.

DePue: I'll make a rare plug here. I have interviewed his daughter, and she talked extensively about her dad. That was Janet Roney.

Findley: Isn't that interesting. He's not alive.

DePue: Right.

Findley: But he really resisted any commodity programs, as I did. But, when Bill Kufus became the president of the Illinois Farm Bureau, the farmers were getting envious of people that got checks from the treasury every month. (laughs) And little by little, they fell into the trap. They're all part of the public service organization now. (laughs)

DePue: One of the things from reading your biography that surprised me: I guess I wasn't aware that we were in the business of selling grain to communist countries, even in the early sixties.

Findley: Yeah, I had some highly publicized tangles with LBJ's [Lyndon Baines Johnson's] administration. The war in Vietnam…I felt, in the war, as a nation, we should have every possible backup for the troops, so we get the thing done. And we shouldn't trade with the enemy. We shouldn't offer any benefits to the enemy if we could avoid it. There were many occasions when LBJ wanted…I can't think of the name of the Polish guy that was his deputy secretary of state. Dean Rusk was secretary of state, but this fellow was his deputy.[39]

DePue: Was it Brzezinski?

Findley: No.

DePue: That was much later.

Findley: Brzezinski was another good friend of mine, that we shared many common views.[40] I've got an autographed copy of his book.

DePue: One of the things you did talk about quite a bit in the book was sugar quotas. What was your view about sugar quotas? What were the politics there?

Findley: [laughs] Oh, that's where I really got into trouble with the chairman of the House Ag Committee and with Page Belcher. The quota system reserved the benefit of the sugar…Let me put it this way, sugar was not a freely produced and marketed commodity. I don't think it is, even today. We allocated the right to produce and market sugar to certain Caribbean countries, mostly, and to some American growers of beet sugar, as well as they had cane sugar in

[39] Dean Rusk (1909-1994) was secretary of state for presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson from 1961 to 1969.
[40] Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928-) was national security advisor under President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981.

Florida. But the domestic part of the operation was fairly small compared to the total of the sugar production from foreign countries. It involved a lot of money. The lobbyists for these countries were very active. They often testified before the committee. And the only dispute they ever had was from me. (laughs) I would ask the wrong questions.

I remember the day I asked one of the lobbyists what his fee for lobbying was. How much did he get to represent whatever country he's representing? Harold Cooley banged the gavel and said, "That question is out of order."[41] He wouldn't let me renew my request, which didn't trouble me greatly, but it made me curious about just how big it was, the lobbying fee.

DePue: So, was this like the camel's nose under the tent?

Findley: That's right. (laughs) So, I went to work, and through some easy research, I got the answers. I wrote an article that was published in the *Reader's Digest*. *Sugar: a Sticky Issue in Washington*, was the title, I believe. It was really quite an experience to work with the editors of the *Digest*, because every word had to be picked apart so that it conveyed exactly the truth.

So this article was published, and it recorded my controversies with Cooley. This caused him a lot of bad publicity, and he was defeated the next time. So, I didn't win any friends on that side of the aisle (laughs), nor did I on the Republican side, because I left the implication at least, that members of Congress were getting support from lobbyists out of this whole structure. I'm sure that was true. I'm sure Cooley got a lot of bucks. And I didn't level the criticism just at Democrats. Page Belcher felt that I had sort of accused him of being in the rain, and he caused me all kinds of trouble. I finally got off the committee. I got on foreign affairs.

I wanted to get back on Ag, too. And, after a little bit of skirmishing, I told Belcher. He was the senior Republican on the committee. I told him that I would gladly give him an undated letter of resignation from the Ag Committee if he would let me be reappointed. He finally relented, and I went back on the committee. We had a kind of a chilly relationship, but he put up with me.

DePue: When you got off, and then on again, that means that you're, then, again the junior member of the committee?

Findley: I was, but a lot of changes occurred in the next few years, and I was at least halfway up on the list.

DePue: In Congress, that's important; isn't it?

[41] Harold Cooley (1897-1974) (D) represented the Fourth Congressional District of North Carolina from 1934 to 1967.

Findley: It certainly is, for a lot of reasons. For example, the chair will always recognize members to speak or ask questions based on the chair they occupy. It was never a big problem for me. But I created a lot of controversies over trading with the enemy during the Vietnam War. I objected to contracts that provided a discount on wheat purchases by the Soviet Union. The House stayed in session until Christmas Eve one year (laughs), just dealing with an amendment that I had been able to get into the consideration of the committee, of the whole.

The Findley amendments quite often carried, because people like to vote against communists (both laugh). And, as communist Russia was getting discounts, I didn't think that they should be able to buy U.S. wheat at a price cheaper than millers here in this country. I generally prevailed, but that Christmas Eve settlement… I think, the House Republican leadership, Charlie Halleck, said the time had come to get it settled. So, he agreed on letting the president ignore the Findley Amendment if he deemed it in the overall interest of the nation.

DePue: When something like that occurs, and we're selling American wheat at a discount, does that mean the U.S. treasury is picking up the difference? How does that work?

Findley: At that time, the government ownership of grain was enormous. It remained on the farm in silos or big buildings.

DePue: But they're purchasing the grain in order to control the price, to a certain extent?

Findley: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: Okay. Did you have a relationship with Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, as well? (Findley laughs) And, was he Kennedy or Johnson or both?

Findley: Orville Freeman was appointed by Kennedy.[42] He stayed through Johnson, I believe. He called me publicly—on one occasion—"the hatchet man of the Republican Party." (both laugh)

A man ran against me, nominated by the Democrats. I think I was up for my third term, and he came with Orville Freeman to Springfield, Illinois for a breakfast meeting with the news media. I knew he was in town, and I found out he was in the hotel. I thought I'd stop by and greet him, which I did. He was dealing with the press at the time, and it infuriated Orville Freeman that I burst in on his effort to support this Democrat against me. He was still pawing the earth when he got to Quincy, Illinois, because he somehow found a typewriter and wrote me a letter, (laughs) a furious complaint about my

[42] Orville Freeman (1918-2003) was secretary of agriculture under Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson from 1961 to 1969.

behavior. And I put the text of that letter…I guess it got in *The Federal Farm Fable*, the text of it. Later on, I got along with Orville okay. (laughs)

DePue: But it sounds, at that time, like it didn't bother you at all that he'd sent you the letter.

Findley: No, it didn't. I got good headlines out of it.

DePue: I wanted to ask you about a couple other things that I think you started to put your mark on the wall, in terms of a freshman legislator, of those early years. One of them was, dealt with postal service for newspapers.

Findley: The newspapers had the longstanding privilege of delivering their newspapers by postal service, without charge, in the county of publication. For most of them, that was about their whole list. There were three freshmen Republicans elected to the House. I think it was the first term. One was Charles Mosher, M-o-s-h-e-r, of Ohio.[43] The other was also from Ohio, the very ultraconservative guy. What was his name? He ran for president. [Findley is referring to John Ashbrook][44] Mosher, Ashbrook and I all agreed that that was an unwarranted benefit to newspapers, and we didn't have any protests from the newspaper owners. I think some of them grumbled a bit. They kind of liked it the way it was, but that was a major advance. That was, I think, very progressive.

DePue: I'm surprised you weren't inundated by your old journalist buddies, saying, "What are you doing? You're a traitor to the cause." (both laugh)

Findley: Well, I don't think I really had a single protest letter.

DePue: How about Food for Peace? What was it, and what was your involvement with it?

Findley: (pause) We were providing food aid to Yugoslavia, who was also providing food aid to North Vietnam. That was a big showdown I had with the State Department. Dean Rusk was not directly involved. It was this Polish fellow. (laughs) Entirely on his own, he invited me to lunch in the State Department. He thought wining and dining would do the job. All he had to do was to explain some of the higher elements of foreign policy and why we had to give aid to Yugoslavia. (laughs) Even though it was a dictatorship and trading with the enemy, he thought that should be unimpaired.

I accepted the lunch. I always enjoyed having lunch at the State Department. Midway through lunch, (laughs) one of his staff came in the room and handed a document to him. It was a statement that my staff had put

[43] Charles Mosher (1906-1984) (R) represented the Thirteenth Ohio District from 1961 to 1977.
[44] John Ashbrook (1928-1982) (R) represented the Seventeenth Ohio District from 1961 to 1982. In 1972, Ashbrook ran against President Richard Nixon in the New Hampshire, Florida and California primaries.

out several days earlier, in which they explained my total opposition to the position the secretary was trying to sell me on. He was furious. He got red in the face. Let's see…We didn't get dessert. I remember that. (both laugh) He didn't even bother with a cup of coffee. He was outraged. He thought that I had planted that, just to embarrass him. It embarrassed him, and maybe somebody planted it, but he should have had that article called to his attention before he invited me, because it was dated several days earlier.

(laughs) I had lots of support from columnists, commentators, Drew Pearson, for most of my activities.[45] There was one time I got a lot of publicity in the *New York Times* for my complaint over the quality of some cannon from Switzerland or from Germany that the Defense Department bought to be operational on tanks. I finally convinced them that the gun was faulty, based on information that a *Chicago Daily News* reporter kept feeding me. They made a minor purchase of a few guns, and that was the end of it. So, it was a complete victory on my part.

DePue: I wanted to ask you a few questions then about the John F. Kennedy domestic agenda, and then we'll turn to foreign affairs. So, let's talk about a couple of the high profile ones. The space program.

Findley: I believe I voted against everything. (laughs) My voting record the first two years in the House showed…Well, one of the professors at Illinois College, Joe Patterson Smith, said to his friends that I was a Neanderthal, and I was. (both laugh) I was; there's no doubt about it.

DePue: What was your opposition to the space program?

Findley: Money, cost. We had a little deficit, nothing like today.

DePue: How about the Peace Corp?

Findley: I voted against it.

DePue: Because?

Findley: Well, it was another additional expenditure. I voted against Medicare. My opponent, Pete Mack,[46] the veteran popular representative from the adjoining district who had to run against me, ran a half-page ad several times. He listed all the things that I had voted against, and it was accurate.

[45] Drew Pearson (1897-1969) was a well-known journalist noted for his syndicated column, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," and his NBC radio program, *Drew Pearson Comments.*

[46] Peter Mack (1916-1986) (D) represented the Twenty-first Illinois District from 1949 to 1963. Redistricting in 1961 forced Mack to run against Findley in the newly reconstituted Twentieth District.

DePue: I've got the quote here, "Findley voted against the space program, social security, rural electrification, college aid, healthcare, education, welfare, educational television and higher minimum wages."

Findley: (laughs) It's true. My campaign was on behalf of leaving to the states and to the private citizens as much as possible and freeing the central government from the authority. I changed my mind later on, quite quickly, but that was my philosophy of my campaign. That's the way I voted and the way I argued. Despite that totally negative voting record, I beat Pete Mack. I think I was the only one in the state that thought I had chance to win, but I beat him.

DePue: How about your opposition to educational television? Was it just a fiscal reason or some philosophical reasons, as well?

Findley: Well, I didn't think the federal government had any business running a TV network.

DePue: Is that one of the views that you've changed over the years?

Findley: Oh, you bet. PBS is about the only thing I watch on television now. (DePue laughs)

DePue: How about opposition to raising the minimum wage?

Findley: I thought it would be inflationary and impose hardship on some people who had limited ability and no chance to get a job at that higher rate. I felt it was harmful to the individual seeking employment, as well as a burden on business.

DePue: Have you changed your views on minimum wage?

Findley: Yes, I sure have. I think we ought to raise it again.

DePue: Well, just within the last couple days, Governor Pat Quinn said he wanted to raise it to $10 in the state of Illinois, which is a significant jump. It's somewhere in the $8 range.

Findley: I think it's a good idea.

DePue: You've mentioned a couple times already about this important race that you had in 1962. (Findley laughs) I've got the maps here of the district that you started with, and you were in the—

Findley: I was in the twentieth and the new district was still called the twentieth, but I think the twenty-second was eliminated.

DePue: Tell us more about that redistricting, how it was done, and what was the impact on you?

Findley: I was a freshman member. I was, I think, pretty well supported by the state party. Actually, I had little protest from anybody about my voting record. It was not an unpopular position I took, but it was a poorly informed one.

DePue: Were you making those votes primarily with an eye towards reelection, or was that how you really felt during that first term?

Findley: Both. I thought I would stand by my position in the campaign, and I believed in it. But, there were a lot of factors that changed my view. For example, I thought, Why not leave the question of civil rights to the states? I was content with that. But a friend of mine, here in Jacksonville, took a Boy Scout troop to southern states one day and reported their experience. They would stop at a gas station. There would be a toilet for whites, a toilet for blacks, and that puzzled the Scouts. They couldn't understand that difference, because they weren't used to it up here. That got me to thinking.

I think one of my first major changes in my attitude on what the federal government should be doing was civil rights. And I never deviated from that. I bucked Jerry Ford on the first civil rights vote.[47] He announced that he was going to vote against it, and he did. I had the temerity to write a letter to all the Republicans in the House and circulate it, arguing that, being the party of Lincoln, we had no choice. We had to support civil rights legislation, and quite a number of Republicans voted for it. But Gerald Ford did not. But, he voted for all the rest of them.

DePue: So, this was one of the provisions of the civil rights legislation.

Findley: Yes. This was on open occupancy housing, I believe.

DePue: That's a few years from where we are with this 1962 election, I believe.

Findley: Yes. Yes, that's true. It was '64 that that happened.

DePue: Okay, so let's go back to that election. Tell me a little bit more about Peter Mack, because he was in the neighboring district—I guess it was the 21st—and that included Sangamon County.

Findley: It sure did. I welcomed Sangamon County for a lot of reasons.

DePue: So, the redistricting put that into your—

Findley: Oh, yes. And really, he had been an immensely popular guy. He had seniority. He was on the…not the Appropriations Committee, but one of the very senior important committees and very prominent.[48] His work was covered in the *New*

[47] Prior to becoming the thirty-eighth president of the United States, Gerald "Jerry" Ford (1913-2006) represented Fifth Michigan District from 1949 to 1973, serving as House minority leader from 1965 to 1973.
[48] Mack served on the House Commerce Committee.

York Times quite a bit. He flew a private plane around the world. He was a pilot. That was his idea of a peace initiative, and he got a lot of press, good press, for that. He also took fifty or sixty underprivileged kids to Washington for a tour every year. Unions paid for it, I'm sure, but it was a good idea.

I couldn't find anybody that was opposed to him (both laugh), so I knew it was an uphill battle. But, I had already developed a pretty fair party structure of my own, not in every precinct, but in probably a third of them at least, there was somebody that was my guy for getting out the vote. Another one would be my guy to raise money for the campaign, because then, all the money in the campaign came from the district, as it should. Now, none of it comes from there, very little of it. I worked hard. (sighs) I defended my Neanderthal position effectively. (laughs) I guess there were a lot of Neanderthals in the district at the time, and I had a comfortable margin when I beat him.

DePue: I wanted to talk about a couple of the things that you did—I don't think just for this campaign—but things that you did to be a successful politician, to get your name out there, to raise money, et cetera. One of the things you talked about were the buffalo barbeques. Tell us about that.

Findley: (laughs) That was a novelty. That was a part of my '62 campaign. That's where it started. Someone in my team had had the experience of eating a buffalo barbequed sandwich someplace out west. So, it struck my campaign leaders as a novel idea that would be very popular. We were able to arrange to serve buffalo barbeque at the fairgrounds in New Berlin. Now, the fair wasn't on. It just happens to be the fairgrounds.

DePue: That's the Sangamon County Fair.

Findley: Yes. Some of my campaigners went to Kansas and were able to buy a buffalo to serve. I believe we had two thousand people that showed up just to get the buffalo barbeque, and I met every one of them. (laughs) They enjoyed it. I believe I got word that the buffalo was getting short, so they had to substitute a little bit of beef, but nobody cared. (both laugh)

DePue: Was it ground buffalo?

Findley: Yes. I think there's still probably some farms in Kansas or Nebraska, where they raise buffalo for meat. We bought a whole buffalo and made use of it. We had buffalo barbeques from then on, all year, and they drew crowds. I think we charged a buck apiece.

DePue: Was it just New Berlin or around the district?

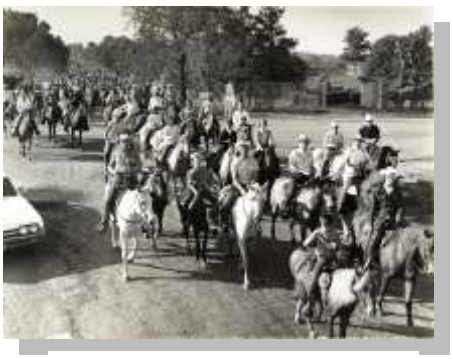
Findley: That's what I meant to say. I know we had one at Macomb. We had one in Quincy and Pittsfield and Jacksonville.

DePue: So, it was one of those novel things that got you some good publicity, and people turn out for it, huh?

Findley: (laughs) Yeah, that's right. It got publicity, too.

DePue: Another one that you talked about quite a bit, I think, also probably pretty novel, were the trail rides.

Findley: They did not start until I'd been in office three terms. Sixty-seven might have been the first trail ride. At that time, an attorney in Springfield, named Harlington Wood, Jr., had been appointed district attorney by Ike, and he stayed on.[49] He loved horses. Now, whether it was originally his idea to have the Findley trail ride, I'm not real sure, but he immediately welcomed it. He made his office the headquarters for planning. He took part in the first trail rides, but, when he became a federal judge, he felt he shouldn't. But it was a huge success. We didn't have it just on campaign years. We had it every year for, I think, sixteen years straight.



One of the Findley Trail Rides.

DePue: What was the trail ride? How would you describe it?

Findley: The horses and riders would gather Friday night, sometimes up to midnight, bringing their trailers in from all over, not just from my district. Some of them came from Chicago, from Missouri and all over. We had a reunion of the Findley trail riders a year ago the last day of June last year, 2012. I have a history of them written by one of the surviving leaders. I don't have it with me. It could provide facts, if you'd like to have them. It was one of the most effective campaign projects that ever happened, I think. Yet, I have not found it being done anyplace else. I suggested it to a number of candidates in Illinois.

DePue: I assume that it wasn't just having all these people get together with their horses, but an actual ride?

Findley: Oh, yeah. They gathered Friday night. Saturday morning we would head out with a ride about 8:00, maybe 7:30, and ride, I believe, about ten miles, have a catered lunch by Hamiltons. The young man who now owns the Hamilton catering service and owns a nice building here in Jacksonville, has developed a nice business for receptions and dinners, service clubs and all that. He was eleven years old when his dad agreed to cater the Findley trail rides. He

[49] Harlington Wood, Jr. (1920-2008) was appointed U.S. attorney for the Illinois Southern District in 1958 and assistant attorney general for the Civil Division of the U.S. Department of Justice in 1972. He participated in the cases involving Native American protests at Alcatraz Island (1969-1971) and Wounded Knee, South Dakota (1973). He was judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit from 1976 to 2008.

helped on every one of them for sixteen years. So, he wound up at the age of twenty-seven, when we had the last one. (laughs) He's still here.

It involved a lot of people. There were at least twenty people who considered themselves trail bosses. They were the ones who kept order and made sure there wasn't any running or any bad behavior on the trail rides. The morning session was, I think, a little bit longer than the afternoon session on the Saturday. Then, we had a program at night. We would have a guest speaker, a performer and a lot of fun, maybe square dancing. And Sunday morning, we would have a brief ride, about two hours, maybe three. Before they would take off we'd have a minister who would say a few words among the whinnies. (both laugh) We had Monsignor Driscoll, here in Jacksonville, performed, gave the message. The sermons were very brief. We were in the saddle by the time we had the service. (laughs)

But you know, all of that was fun for the people that came. They love horses. They like to be with other people that like horses. And here, they had two full days of it. We would wrap it up, with a catered Sunday dinner of fried chicken on the trail at noon, and that was the end. Then, the people headed for home. We went from one county seat to another. We had two of them in Pittsfield, maybe three. I don't think we duplicated anyplace else. We aimed to get to every county in the district.

DePue: Did you have Lucille and the kids go with you?

Findley: My wife actually got on a horse one year, but didn't stay on very long. It was an English saddle, had nothing to hold onto. (both laugh) But she was a good sport and got saddled in. One year, they gave me that saddle as a gift. It had been made to order, made to fit. I'm sure it cost a lot of money, but they chipped in to buy it.

DePue: We'll get a picture of that, perhaps. (Findley laughs) How about the kids?

Findley: Oh, Diane loved horses. She was on every trail ride, all sixteen.

DePue: Did they otherwise help out with Dad's campaigns?

Findley: Not much. Well, Diane was one of the Findley girls' original campaigns. We involved an awful lot of people in those early campaigns. A lady in Pittsfield organized an essay contest. There wasn't a big prize, but it led to a lot of kids in the grade school level writing just a little, brief comment of why I ought to be reelected. (laughs) The newspapers would publish those little items, and that created a lot of good conversation. Mary Tedrow—she's still alive—she handled the essay contest.

DePue: Well, listening to these stories, I'll ask you now. I mean, we could ask this many times in the interview, but, do you think the nature of these congressional campaigns has changed, since those days?

Findley: It has, definitely. Whether it should have changed is another question. I'm puzzled, to this day, as to why somebody else didn't pick up the trail ride idea, because it worked so beautifully for me. Maybe it was the lack of anybody like Harlington Wood, who had resources, had a love of horses, a strong Republican. He occupied a very senior job with Richard Nixon. He's head of the civil division of the Department of Justice. And, by the way, he later on was invited by Jimmy Carter to head the FBI. When he had the interview with Carter, he went back to talk to his ailing mother, and she begged him not to take it. She was afraid he'd be killed. So, he sent his regrets.

DePue: That's interesting. Getting back to that campaign, we touched a little about the issues, the quote that I read about all the things you had voted against. I'm wondering if social issues, in those days, ever came up in the campaigns. The one that I would think of, at the time, would be abortion, for example.

Findley: Every year. I could count on it every year. I never agreed to sponsor a Constitutional amendment. I took the view that I had never recommended an abortion to anybody and doubted that I ever would. But I felt it was such an intimate, personal, family problem that no Constitutional amendment could be phrased that would really meet all such circumstances and that we were better off to leave it to the Supreme Court and the judgments they made. I did oppose federal involvement in that issue in my first campaign, I'm sure.

DePue: Was that a strong issue or just one of the minor ones, during those campaigns?

Findley: It was always a vexing issue, and it still is. I pity anybody running for office that has to deal with it. I still have a project I haven't done. I hope I'll do it. A lawyer that I've become acquainted with—through the mail and the email—in Canada is Catholic and has made a lifelong study of abortion as a political issue. He said that, if we would simply return to the traditions of the British common law and its treatment of abortion, the issue would go away. But I haven't tried to elevate that issue to public discussion.

DePue: What's the position, if you can paraphrase?

Findley: The common law provided that abortion would never be a felony. It would always be considered a wrong, a misdemeanor, but never punished by jail time or otherwise. According to this lawyer, John Graham, he said that, over the centuries of two or three hundred years, the British common law treatment of abortion had never become controversial. They accepted the punishment levied under the common law. It didn't treat it as a good. It treated it as a wrong, but not a felony, never a felony.

John Graham had some correspondence with John Paul, the former Pope, who is now a saint. Letters that John Paul sent to Graham on this subject leads Graham to believe that he would feel comfortable with a return of the common law practice. Boy, it would be such a blessing for our political

endeavors to have that out of contention. I think the common law approach is perfect for it, but I never heard of it when I was in Congress. I was frequently paraded—had protestors carry banners and signs calling me a baby killer and things like that—because I simply didn't want the Constitution to try to regulate it.

DePue: At the time you were sitting in Congress, it was up to each one of the states to determine what the laws were.

Findley: It was, but the…what was the great case, Roe v. Wade?

DePue: Roe v. Wade was 1973.

Findley: Yeah, but I was still in office. The national campaigns over abortion started before that, probably started long before Roe v. Wade got to the court. But it became very intense once Roe v. Wade was the law of the land. I could count on visits every year with flowers and all that stuff, and I could count on protests. Many of my supporters were ardent Catholics and opposed to abortion. To my amazement, they stayed with me. They thought my position was not bad.

DePue: Is that to say that you agreed fundamentally with the decision that came out of the Supreme Court that year?

Findley: I did. I did. I said I felt that the court's handling of it was satisfactory, and I said the court may have a different view later on, but we ought to leave it to the court.

DePue: Certainly, part of the challenge at that time was, where did the court find anything in the Constitution to make its finding?

Findley: I forget the phrases. I just don't remember.

DePue: It ended up being an issue of privacy, which is not one of the Bill of Rights, but it was something that had been a decision before.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: And it was based on that decision.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Okay, going back to other issues, and we've laid out several of the issues that you—

Findley: I didn't try to make abortion an issue. It was never a part of my program. I regretted when protests did occur, and sometimes it was very, very fervent. Who is this woman in Alton?

DePue: Phyllis Schlafly.

Findley: Yeah. (laughs) I must say, she could have caused me all kinds of problems. I don't believe there was ever a day when she caused me a single difficulty. She just left me alone.

DePue: But Alton is in your district, isn't it? Was it?

Findley: Oh, yes. It was for ten years.

DePue: Well, here's my second plug, congressman. I've also interviewed Phyllis Schlafly.

Findley: You have?

DePue: Yes, I have. (Findley laughs)

Findley: She's still alive, I guess.

DePue: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Findley: The Eagle Forum.

DePue: Correct. Okay, going back to these other issues, all the things that you'd voted against, what was your counter, as far as Mack was concerned? What stuck out in the book was "Two-way Mack."

Findley: (laughs) Yeah. I suppose I shouldn't be too proud of that, but he did shift ground a few times, as I did. I think I got the *[Springfield] Journal Register* to publish a comment and a direct quotation that I said, "He jumped across the fence so many times that he must have torn a good many pairs of trousers." (both laugh)

DePue: Did you have the support of newspapers, endorsing your campaign?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: More so than Mack did?

Findley: Oh, yes. That's where I did have a professional advantage, because I'd become acquainted with them in press meetings every year when I was running the paper in Pittsfield. I always called on the newspaper person whenever I visited a town. I had a very firm policy on that.

DePue: I'm looking at your congressional district here, and I'm sure you knew him. I know you knew him, because we've mentioned his name before, Paul Simon, who is also a newspaper editor. Would he have come out in endorsing your campaign? I would think not.

Findley: There was a time when I was almost certain that my district would be combined with his, and I talked with Paul about it. We had mutual respect. I actually looked forward to that happening. I thought a series of debates would be edifying for the district, and I felt sure that Paul would keep them on a good level. The way he tangled with Chuck Percy later on made me later wonder if he would have. (laughs) But, at that point, I thought this would be kind of fun to run against Paul Simon.[50] He'd been lieutenant governor.

DePue: Well, that came later. That came in the late '60s. I would have thought he was still in the Illinois House at the time.

Findley: That's right. He ran for governor later, didn't he? He was a very clever guy.

DePue: He got defeated in the '72 primary by Dan Walker, and he had been Ogilvie's lieutenant governor for…that would have been from '68 to '72.

Findley: The offices were not paired together, governor and lieutenant governor, then.

DePue: They managed to fix that in the 1970 Illinois Constitution.

Findley: Yeah. (both laugh)

DePue: Okay, let's get back to your '62 campaign. There's just one more question for you, Congressman. How satisfying was it for you to win?

Findley: (pauses) I really think I was confident of winning, but I was overjoyed. I felt I had bested one of the real stalwarts of the Democratic Party in Pete Mack. He just didn't have any enemies. He'd been in office sixteen years, I believe, and was riding high. I think he thought he had an easy win. I think he probably wasn't serious about my challenge. In fact, we sat together in the House Chamber during the previous term. This made me one of the promising figures in downstate Illinois. I think I could have gotten the nomination for governor or senator had I worked for it, but I didn't want it.

DePue: Is that because you were comfortable as a congressman?

Findley: Yes. A senator can't possibly maintain a close relationship with much of his district. And I had a good relationship. As I changed, I'm not sure my supporters changed, but they stayed with me. Dropouts were almost unknown. They had fun. We tried to make every campaign fun, and we did.

DePue: That's why I was asking the question before, about how campaigns have changed, because you don't get that sense today on that.

[50] Paul Simon (D) (1928-2003) served as an Illinois state representative from 1955 to 1963 and an Illinois state senator from 1963 to 1968. He was lieutenant governor of Illinois from 1969 to 1973. He represented the Twenty-fourth Illinois District in the House of Representatives from 1975 to 1983 and the Twenty-second Illinois District from 1983 to 1985. He was a U.S. senator from 1985 to 1996.

Findley: It's sad. Even after I got elected, I immediately started working across the aisle. I had lots of Democratic friends, and many of them supported me a lot. It was really a joy to serve. I wouldn't enjoy it today, working under the new speaker. I was never in the majority, so I never knew a Republican speaker. (laughs) But I wouldn't fit at all.

DePue: Let's turn the page here and ask you a few questions about JFK's foreign policies. You came in at the same time the president did.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: The first thing that he stubbed his toe seriously on was the Bay of Pigs.

Findley: I remember being at a reception with a couple hundred other people, and I had a chance for just a brief few words with Kennedy. I had taken a survey of district opinion about engaging Cuba. I told Kennedy that, if he decided on taking stern measures with Cuba, that I was sure he would have a lot of support in my district, and I think he would have. He listened, and he was very polite, but said nothing.

DePue: So, this is before the Bay of Pigs.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Well, it all fell apart very quickly, in part because it was something that was on the books in the Eisenhower administration. And he went ahead and executed it, but not with any kind of firm backing, I think it would be fair to say.

Findley: It was a terrible misstep by Kennedy, but he quickly overcame that difficulty. He handled Khrushchev beautifully. He avoided a war, and that could have been a major conflict.

DePue: Let me bring that up, because you're obviously talking about the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was October of '62.

DePue: I think about a year after the Bay of Pigs.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: And, of course, that's all triggered by the discovery that the Soviets are emplacing missiles into Cuba.

Findley: I was not privy to what was happening in the White House. I don't recall that I sensed that we were on the edge of the cliff and might be in a terrible exchange of nuclear weapons, but we were. I'm sure of that today. But the Kennedys, Bobby and Jack, I think, talked it out with Dean Rusk and came up with a good answer. They had two letters from Khrushchev, one, very fiery

and one, more moderate. They chose to ignore the fiery letter and respond to the moderate one. They made a deal under which, he'd pull his missiles out of Cuba, and they would pull our missiles out of Turkey. I wondered if that was too good of a bargain to give them, but I guess the Jupiters—I think they were called—were not a very essential part of our nuclear weapons. As I look back on it, it was one of the great triumphs of diplomacy.

DePue: The world's never been closer to that nuclear trigger than those days.

Findley: I believe that. Ike said that we were staring in the possibility, the real possibility, of a bomb that would wreak havoc over entire North America.

DePue: As a congressman at that time, did you feel the immense pressure, the tension of those days?

Findley: I did not. I did not. I'm glad we had good leadership. Maybe LBJ could have handled it, too. I don't know. But the Kennedys did a good job.

DePue: One of the other issues that the Kennedy administration was facing—and it's going to be the overwhelming issue after Johnson gets in—is America's growing involvement in Southeast Asia, especially South Vietnam.

Findley: We had a treaty arrangement that I had some familiarity with, SEATO.

DePue: Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

Findley: I didn't understand Ho Chi Minh and his cause, and I don't think very many people in Washington did, either. We could have avoided that war and should have. Kennedy sent about 2,000 troops there, intended to be just training personnel.

DePue: Advisors.

Findley: Advisors, that's it. That was a mistake, but not a huge one. There was a general. The name David comes to mind, but I'm not sure. But, one of the prominent generals of that time suggested that, instead of getting involved in the interior of Vietnam, just hold onto some enclaves on the coast, maintain them, protect them and use them as bargaining chips later on, but not get into major conflict. I wish I could think of his name, but I can't. By the way, he sent me a letter of support when I organized the trip to Paris to investigate the disarray of NATO and the problem with France. But, had his advice been taken, that whole war could have been avoided. We should have understood that Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist, more than a communist. I think Tito was too.

DePue: But did you see it that way in 1962 and 1963?

Findley: Well, there was a stage. I remember having a meeting with…Who was the great general, the Air Force general?

DePue: Curtis LeMay?

Findley: Yeah. I was in a little room with Curtis LeMay, and he talked about bombing North Vietnam back to the stone ages. I thought that, maybe if we would really rally the country and get the full force of America, which was certainly substantial, we could prevail. But, I'm glad that Curtis LeMay wasn't able to call the shots.

DePue: Was this an issue at all in your 1962 campaign?

Findley: I don't believe so. I can't recall it.

DePue: It certainly became one by '64. But I don't want to get there yet, because I've got one more question to ask you about John F. Kennedy. Of course, that's the inevitable question about his assassination, November 22, 1963. Remember that day?

Findley: It was an awful day. I sure do. I was on Capitol Hill, in the office of a New York Republican whose name slips my mind, but, when I heard one of the staffers report his killing, assassination, I couldn't imagine how LBJ would pick up the reins as well as he had handled them. I thought LBJ was kind of a pedestrian politician, whereas I thought Kennedy really had a vision for the country. I came to admire Kennedy immensely, during his hundred days, or thousand days, so his death was a great personal loss.

DePue: Did you feel the emotional pain that others felt at the time, or was it more of a political calculation, as you've described so far?

Findley: I guess it was more of a political calculation. I still was not fully informed about the crisis we had gone through.

DePue: You mean the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Findley: Yeah. And I had no idea about the showdown that Kennedy was trying to have with the Israelis at that very time. In fact, I just plain had no interest in the Middle East. But I attended all of the very somber events in the White House and the cathedral and elsewhere.

Your Congressman, H.R. Gross, complained when he heard that there would be a permanent flame burning at public expense over the grave. Do you remember that? It's a wonder he ever got reelected. I think he must have been highly entertaining to the people back home. I remember one day, he was complaining about daylight time, as if that affected the behavior of farmers, which is doesn't. But he said, "This means they'll have to be out there in the

soybean fields, with gunny cloth, banging the dew off the plants." He was really funny.

DePue: Okay, I want to finish off today with a discussion about LBJ. He's now in office, is going to have to get reelected pretty soon. But, I wanted to finish off today with a discussion about the many initiatives he took, the Great Society programs in the Civil Rights Movement. Let's start off with civil rights outside the administration and what had been going on in the country from the late '50s through the early '60s and, basically, a movement led by Martin Luther King. What are you feelings about all of that?

Findley: I felt I should be a part of it. And day by day, I just felt I was in the wrong place, staying on the Hill. I had great sympathy for the blacks. I had an incident with the FBI over that, which irritated me greatly. When Martin Luther King died, I immediately recommended that we set aside the rules at Arlington and permit him to be buried there. I got a lot of press. Back home, it was not a popular idea. My staff leader—I think it was Bob Wischer at the time—he said, "That united your district as nothing else had. It was all against you."

DePue: What was his last name?

Findley: Oh, I'm not sure. Let's see.

DePue: Bob—

Findley: Bob W-i-s-c-h-e-r, pronounced Wixor. He was there. He was recommended to me by Steven Jones, who later came aboard. Oh, it was Don Marshall who made that comment. Don was a professor at Western Illinois University. He was on my staff for a whole year, then he went back to the university. I think he was the one that made that comment. I knew that from complaints of my wife. She liked to criticize Martin Luther King for his womanizing, but I saw greatness in him, myself.

DePue: Kennedy's assassinated, and Johnson picks up the mantel. And whether out of sympathy for JFK or Johnson's political skills, to arm wrestle members of Congress, we start to make some significant advances in civil rights. You had to be right there in the midst of that, obviously, the Civil Rights Act of '64.

Findley: I was instantly supportive, and I was amazed that he would do it.

DePue: That Johnson would do it.

Findley: Because he had come out of the Southern Manifesto period. He had signed on.

DePue: What do you mean the Southern Manifesto? I'm not familiar with that.

Findley: That was a statement that a lot of the southern legislatures signed on, very much carefully worded, but it was an assault on segregation. Bill Fulbright, I think, signed it once, and he had to apologize later.

DePue: Of Arkansas, I believe.

Findley: Yeah. LBJ very properly said, "Well, I have a new responsibility now that I didn't have when I signed the manifesto." He dismissed it that way. I admired him for his statement. He broke with the past. He really took a chance with his party. I'm sure he upset a lot of them.

DePue: Was that to say that much of the resistance to that change was coming from the Democrat Party, more so than the Republican Party?

Findley: Both sides. In my early years in the House, I often presented an amendment, or supported an amendment—which was known as the Powell Amendment—which provided that, whatever was being authorized in that bill would take effect only if the service was freely available to all, without regard of race, without respect to race. I offered that to the dismay of some Republicans in the Ag Committee. We had bills that dealt with parks and things like that, and I tried to get the amendment adopted there. If I didn't get it adopted there, I tried on the House floor. I generally got it in on the House floor, where I didn't in the committee. The Ag Committee was dominated by old time Democrats that had lived with segregation and wanted it to stay.

DePue: Those were the days when the Democrats had control of the House for close to decades, and the senior Democrats were always southern Democrats, weren't they?

Findley: That's right, yeah. The committee advancement tradition made that a certainty, because the ones that stayed there the longest got to be chairman. It had advantages, I soon found out, but it was a flawed system.

DePue: But getting back to the debates about the passage of the Civil Rights Act in the House.

Findley: I don't think I took much of a part. I just would have to check on my records. I usually spoke out on everything. But I did speak out back home, because it was a hot topic back home. I remember the Dunlap Hotel here had a big barber shop, and, boy, they were upset about the idea that they had to cut the hair for black people if they came in. A couple of them said, "Well, I'll just quit barbering if that happens." They didn't, but they said that. My district, to a great extent, had been populated by people from Kentucky and Tennessee, not from the north, not from the Swedish.

DePue: Yeah, the northern boundary of your district is probably the dividing line between.

Findley: Pretty close to it, yes. But I knew that civil rights had to be dealt with at the federal level. I was late coming to it, but by then I was totally convinced and enthusiastic for it. I view that as the happiest time in my service, the opportunity to vote yes.

DePue: Uou had the opportunity to do that for the Civil Rights Act of '64 and the Voting Rights Act of '64.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Any particular memories for the second piece of that, the Voting Rights Act?

Findley: I think it was the open occupancy one.

DePue: The fair housing issues.

Findley: Yeah, the fair housing issue that Gerry Ford voted against.

DePue: That would have been '64 then.

Findley: Was that the first one?

DePue: I'd have to check on that myself.

Findley: I thought his showdown was on the first one, which was over housing. But I didn't share his view on it, and I campaigned against him. One later moment, when I wanted a favor from him, he pulled out a copy of my "Dear Colleague" letter opposing him, but he granted my request, anyway. He wasn't a vindictive type.

DePue: So, it was in a good-natured way he showed you that.

Findley: Yes, that's right.

DePue: How about the second part of what Johnson was pursuing? That's the whole War on Poverty series of legislation.

Findley: Oh, and by the way, Gerry Ford cooperated fully in my project that brought a high school age black from Springfield, who became a page, the first black page in history.

DePue: Do you remember his name?

Findley: Yeah, Frank Mitchell.

DePue: Where was he from?

Findley: He was from Springfield at that time. He later became a television personality in Minneapolis for NBC, I believe. Then, he also did some work for a big

telephone company in Kansas. If he didn't like the employer, he quit. He moved several times, to my surprise. I got a call from him about a month ago, saying that he was now living in Texas and had remarried. It was quite an experience.

DePue: Yeah, I bet. Great Society programs, the War on Poverty.

Findley: Oh, let me tell you a little bit more about Martin Luther King's death.

DePue: Well, I was going to wait a little bit before we got there, because that's four years down the road.

Findley: Okay.

DePue: If you don't mind, Congressman.

Findley: That's all right. What's the topic?

DePue: The War on Poverty and other Great Society programs.

Findley: I remember vividly opposing the Peace Corp. On a reflection, that's one of the worst votes I ever cast. Lyndon Johnson was a magic figure, dealing with Congress. He had an assistant for Congressional affairs named Henry Hall Wilson. Wilson showed me his desk one day. He had on one wall a little plaque for every LBJ program that had been approved by Congress. There must have been twenty-five or thirty of them on the wall. He had a way of getting things through Congress that he wanted. He kept us in session one time over his bill to authorize beautification of highways, putting billboards away from the highway.

DePue: That was his wife's?

Findley: Yeah, that was his wife's idea, but he picked it up. And we stayed in session late one night to finally get through that. I guess I voted against most of them.

DePue: For fiscal reasons?

Findley: A general feeling that I still was groping with, that the federal government shouldn't be trying to do all these things, not that I was opposed to them, but I'd much preferred that they be done at the state level.

DePue: I think you mentioned this before. That would include a vote against Medicare and Medicaid?

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Okay. Congressman, I think that's probably a good place for us to stop today. We'll pick up LBJ and foreign policy next time around.

Findley: Don't forget Martin Luther King.

DePue: I'll make sure we get that in there. Well, I love to talk to people about 1968.

Findley: Have you got two minutes?

DePue: Sure, go ahead. Go ahead.

Findley: Let tell you what happened. My proposal got a lot of AP coverage. It was printed all over the country, and it was protested by everybody in my district except one woman in Beardstown, the widow of a doctor. Her last name was Mudd, M-u-d-d. I've always been grateful to her, because she's the only one that complimented me on that proposal.

But what happened the next day is that J. Edgar Hoover sent one of his lieutenants in to counsel me on the real Martin Luther King. This guy said he had a tape he would like to have me hear, a recording of the conversation when Martin Luther King was in bed with another woman. He had it on tape, and they wanted me to hear that, in light of the compliment I wanted to give Martin Luther King. So, that was J. Edgar Hoover's way of scolding me.

DePue: Did you reassess the decision then?

Findley: I told him I wasn't interested in hearing it. If that's all he had, we were all through.

DePue: So, you never even heard the tape.

Findley: No, no, I didn't want to. My wife was upset with me. She said, "I would like to have heard it."

DePue: That's an interesting anecdote to finish today with, Congressman. There's been quite a lot of meat on the bones in this conversation, because these are important things in American's history, so I really appreciate your helping us discuss these.

Findley: I'll be glad to give you a little more detail on the variety of things we did to make sure that people enjoyed the campaigns.

DePue: Well, we can get into that the next session, then.

Findley: Yeah, sure.

DePue: Thank you, Congressman.

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Interview #4: February 19, 2013
Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Tuesday, February 19, 2013. My name is Mark DePue, Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Jacksonville again, and, I believe, Congressman, this is our fourth session. I'm talking to Congressman Paul Findley in his office, which is on the campus of Illinois College. Good morning, sir.

Findley: Good morning.

DePue: Last time, we talked about domestic policy during the JFK and the Johnson years. Now, we get into a subject which I think is close to your heart. We talked last time about your attempts to get onto the Foreign Affairs Committee. We're going to be talking about foreign affairs during the Johnson years and, probably, into some of the Nixon years, as well. So, what I'd like to start with is to have you talk a little bit about your views on France and the troubles that France had in relation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO.

Findley: One of my lifelong heroes was Charles de Gaulle. I thought he was an exceptional political leader, and a good military leader as well. During the LBJ years, there was quite a deep rift between the U.S. government and France. I thought that was both noteworthy and alarming, because France had always been our friend and ally, through thick and thin. I guess there was a very thin eruption way back when, under Washington, but it was brief.

I noticed that de Gaulle was always under attack from Washington, in the Congress, as well as the White House. LBJ had no use for him. At one

time, he would order that French wine is never to be used in White House receptions again. (chuckles) That didn't last long. There wasn't any publicity about the return of French wines.

France took the position that the U.S. government, holding the position of SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe], commander and chief of NATO, should always consult very promptly with France, whenever French soil was put in peril. I recall vividly that de Gaulle was awakened when the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, from his sleep, and he immediately said, "We stand with the U.S.," which was great.

But, on reflection, he didn't like the idea that, in a crisis like that, French military forces could be activated and put into operation without his prior knowledge or approval. He thought the president of France should have the right of approval or disapproval…not an unrealistic view, I would say, but one that could put a question mark over the cohesion of the NATO nations in a crisis. To avert that, de Gaulle ordered that NATO headquarters be removed from France, and they were. That created a lot of unpleasantness on Capitol Hill. I tried to make the French decision understood. It was my first entry into foreign policy, really.

DePue: What timeframe were you talking about, then, in Johnson's administration, or is this still at the latter part of JFK's?

Findley: This was in Johnson. I'm a little hazy on dates. But I had organized what was called the Republican Taskforce on NATO and the Atlantic Community.

One of the reasons I ran for Congress was my hope that I could do something to avert future wars. I saw the need for a federation of governments—not just an alliance, but a federation—of which we would be a part. That, of course, wasn't greeted with enthusiasm by the DAR (chuckles) or some of the other organizations, including VFW and…What's the other major veteran—

DePue: American Legion?

Findley: American Legion, yeah. Well, that crisis developed later, but after I had this experience with France. I guess I persuaded Gerald Ford and Mel Laird—who were, then, the leading forces of the Republican delegation—that my views on France were reasonable. In any event, they authorized something very unique, a Republican mission to Paris to look into the disarray and U.S./French relations and the rift caused by the removal of French forces from NATO command.

De Gaulle asked that the headquarters be moved. He also said he wasn't pleased with the integration of French forces into the NATO command structure. He didn't want to leave the alliance—the national commitment to

the team—but he didn't approve of the way the integrated forces were managed. I'll cite one example.

From the start, it was anticipated that the French would supply the French admiral to be in charge of the Atlantic command along the French coast. That position was never filled, just kept empty. I think that was the only major position in the integrated command that was French and was never used.

They also had a committee within NATO that was restricted in membership to the U.S. and to Britain. Its domain was nuclear weapons. And the decision of the British and Americans was that France is too heavily infected with communists, in the government, to be a useful part of that committee. There was a formal name for that, Military Commission, I believe. The French retort was that the only private citizen that ever got into trouble for mishandling nuclear affairs was a guy named Fuchs, I believe, a Britisher…

DePue: Right, right.

Findley: …not a Frenchman. A Frenchman never did get in trouble. So, they felt offended. De Gaulle felt offended, with justification. So, my little committee became the defender of France in Congress. And apparently, the Republican leadership was on my side at that time. When I suggested we send a mission to Paris to look into these two problems, the Republican Conference, as it was called, endorsed the idea and agreed to pay the cost of the trip…very unusual.

DePue: One of the things you're talking about here is the issue of sovereignty.

Findley: Oh, yeah.

DePue: And it sounds like de Gaulle had issues with handing over what he viewed as French sovereignty to NATO. Of course, that's always a touchy subject, with American politicians and congressmen in particular.

One other question, though. What was the status of Germany, as part of NATO, at that time? This is not that far removed from World War II.

Findley: I used to attend conferences of NATO parliamentarians. (chuckles) Quite often, representatives from Great Britain would refer to Germany as occupied territory, even after they were affiliated with NATO. (laughs) So, it wasn't far removed. I always spoke up firmly on behalf of Germany. I think that's one reason why I got that German Cross.

DePue: Would France's army or Germany's army, at the time, be the main, land army in Europe?

Findley: I think the U.S. Army. I think we had four divisions. Ike later told me that one division would be sufficient. I think they finally came down to that years later. Germany was just out of the Nazi period, and it did not try to assert any position of equality. But the French were reluctant to give them any breaks. And in discussions—we had in parliamentary groups—I became well acquainted with French delegates, as well as German delegates, and I almost always sided with the Germans.

DePue: You say you almost always sided with the Germans.

Findley: Yeah. It was a free give and take. Everyone could speak his own feelings. We weren't united by national delegations.

DePue: Was part of your effort tied to having Congress have a greater role in foreign affairs?

Findley: Yes, tied to having the House have a greater role. The Senate had already done pretty well by being an influence. The Constitution helped that. But I noted that almost no one, even those on the Foreign Affairs Committee or the International Relations Committee; they kept changing the name of the committee over the years. Even the members took no initiatives on their own in the field of foreign policy. I was always doing it.

DePue: Most of your colleagues were content to let the Senate carry the water?

Findley: Yeah. Yeah, I was frequently in the headlines. *New York Times* carried me quite a bit, because I was almost the only one who ever challenged anything foreign policy in the House. One of the reasons I left the Ag Committee, temporarily, to get on foreign affairs was that I saw this vacuum among House members, and I wanted to help fill that. I could do that best from committee membership. So, it made me a busy guy and often controversial. (chuckles)

I never did sell the House membership on the merit of de Gaulle's independent nature, but I truly had great admiration for him all through his life. I thought he did a great job as president of France. He brought the Algeria question. He settled that. That was a brave act on his part, because almost the entire French military establishment wanted to retain Algeria as a part of France. He saw the need to cut loose, and he did it.

DePue: You mentioned Eisenhower a little bit ago. Did you have a close relationship with Eisenhower? And was this issue the reason for it?

Findley: I did, and it was gratifying. I came to admire him hugely because of that. A lot of things happened to illustrate that, but one of my first initiatives was to form this NATO task force. I did that before I got on the Foreign Affairs Committee. I didn't get on the Foreign Affairs Committee until '67, as I recall, but I was out front, leading this mission to Paris, for example, which had got off to a rocky start, thanks to Everett Dirksen, who made fun of it.

(chuckles) He liked to be a humorist in his dealings with the press, and he deliberately made fun of the mission I organized. He never did read the letter that I sent to him, along with others, explaining the whole purpose of the trip. Had he read that, I doubt if he would have made fun of it, but he didn't, ahead of being quizzed by the media. But, I lived to see a major columnists praise our trip when we got back. The trip went off very well, and we lived within the budget that the Republicans set for us. I don't know of any other foreign trip that was partisan in character.

DePue: Was this strictly House members?

Findley: Strictly House Republican members. The funds came from some money that had been accumulated by the Republican leadership of the House. I don't know the origin of the funds, but it was up to their discretion, and they chose to spend it on the trip.

DePue: We mentioned Eisenhower here a couple times, and, of course, Eisenhower is commander in chief of SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces] during the war. I think he was also commander of NATO for a short time, before he became president. Did you talk to him before you took this trip?

Findley: Yes. Now, when Dirksen made fun of it, it created quite a bit of press. One of the reporters asked him, "What do you think of this trip Findley's organized to look into our relationship with France?" He said…what was his comment? Something like, did he really do that or how cute. (chuckles) That's what he—

DePue: How cute?

Findley: How cute. (laughs) They laughed, and they wrote it up. It went out over AP [Associated Press] and UPI [United Press International]. But, I didn't like having the Senate leader—my own Illinois colleague—make fun of the trip before it even started. But he said, "Well, you know, I don't want to get back into it. It's like eating warmed over soup." That's the way he expressed it.

So, our little group that went took a trip to New York. Nixon received us very graciously, talked to the press afterward, said a few words of commendation to what we were doing. And Ike issued some kind of a statement of approval.

DePue: Nixon, at this time, is just a private citizen, isn't he?

Findley: He was, yeah. He was in New York, preparing for a presidential bid. He had just been defeated for election as governor to California. He had two researchers in New York. I didn't know this at the time, but one of them was Steven Jones, who later became my staff leader, one of the most brilliant people I've ever worked with.

Well, I went to see Ike to tell him about the ruckus that Dirksen kicked up—I don't think he had read about it in the papers—and he issued a friendly statement. He had already patted me on the back for forming this NATO task force.

DePue: Is this at Gettysburg, where you met Eisenhower?

Findley: Yes, always at his home. You know, I've got to get a little bit of water. How do I unhook?

DePue: Let me pause this.

Okay, we're back from a quick break. Congressman, my question for you is, meeting Eisenhower… I mean, the reputation is that Eisenhower didn't think that much of de Gaulle himself. That goes back to his wartime experiences.

Findley: It never came up in my discussions with Ike, and I'm not sure. He wasn't as bitter about de Gaulle as Winston Churchill was. Churchill said, "My heaviest cross I had to bear was the Cross of Loraine."[51] (both laugh) Ike never criticized de Gaulle to me. I was able to get appointments with him several times so that the other six members of the Republican Task Force on NATO could join me in meeting him.

One time we had a breakfast meeting with him which we financed, each individually, no cost to him. That was a real treat. Another time, we had lunch with him. Another time, we presented a very nicely done plaque, celebrating his leadership for the unity of the Atlantic community. But I had as many private discussions with him as we had public gatherings, extended gatherings.

One day, my daughter, Diane, who was probably in the second or third grade by then, asked me to deliver one of her school pictures, on which she had written, "I like Ike." So, I delivered that to Ike. I'll tell you, it floored him. It really did. It touched him deeply. Before the day was over, he had written a nice note, saying that he liked Diane, an autographed picture, along with a nice note. Diane has all those in one framed exhibit at her home.

Oh, another time, he asked me if I could tell him how he should proceed to get his granddaughter, Anne, an intern job on Capitol Hill; she'd like to have that experience. Well, he had her situated the moment he asked for it, of course, because I put her on my staff right away. And I had a nice correspondence with her through the years—not in the last ten years—but up to then. She had kind of a rocky marriage experience, and, I guess, carried on with a—what's the term, interior designer? That was her specialty. But Anne,

[51] A medal of highest honor in France, shaped as a cross.

being there in the office, it was very fun to have her around, and I knew that she kept in touch with her granddad.

DePue: What was the consequence of the trip that this Congressional delegation took to Paris?

Findley: We came through with several criticisms of how the federal government had dealt with NATO relations, as they applied to France. I cited a couple of those. It was a very mild statement. Everybody behaved pretty well in Paris, not much in the nightclubs. But, it was covered rather broadly. I can't even think of the columnist that responded—a guy name Drummond, I think—worked for the *Monitor*. He praised it. I've got clippings of all of the coverage that we received. In the preliminary period, before we headed for Paris, I wrote to a number of people.

Anthony Eden was, by then, out, of course, thanks to his stupid endeavor to try to take back the Suez Canal. Ike stopped that, of course. Singlehandedly, he brought an end to the Israeli land invasion of Egypt and to the aerial support that the French and British foolishly were giving to it. But he immediately said, "This is wrong." And he said, "I'm going to stop it." And he did; he stopped the whole thing. They backed up—not just stopped—and even vacated all the land they had taken up to then. That was something that I really applauded. I'm sure that that moment won enormous respect from the Arab world, because here, he stopped the great empire of the leaders of the past from regaining a bit of an empire.

DePue: Of course, all of this happened before you were even in Congress, correct? That was during the Eisenhower administration.

Findley: Oh yeah, sure, sure. But, it was fresh in my mind. Ike was an amazing public servant. He didn't interfere, once he was out of office. He didn't do a Jimmy Carter, for example, commenting. But he did it privately in dealing with members of the House, like the group I got there.

DePue: Did you have the opportunity to meet directly with de Gaulle, himself?

Findley: I had one brief, very brief, meeting. When de Gaulle announced he was coming to the Kennedy funeral, the State Department didn't take care of details too well, at that point. He circled Dulles several times and landed precisely at the minute when he was expected to land, but there was no State Department delegation there at all.

DePue: Okay, I wouldn't worry about that too much there, Congressman.

Findley: Steve Jones and I had gone there—knowing that de Gaulle would land—on the hope that we could meet him. We turned out to be the official welcoming committee for de Gaulle. He was all dressed up in a general's uniform, a tall man, very, very imposing, but he paused long enough to shake hands with us,

before he got into his Citroën. You know, those cars that are low when people are getting in and out of them, but they pump up the height a little bit, air pressure. So, he got in the Citroën; it grew a little bit in height, and off he went to the embassy. I stood fairly close to him at the Arlington Cemetery when JFK was buried, and Lucille said she wished I'd stayed a little further away. He's such a target. He was that much taller than anybody else in the crowd.

DePue: I don't know if we talked much about JFK's assassination. I think we mentioned it a little bit last time. Was that a pretty impressive ceremony?

Findley: I did not grasp, immediately, the enormity of that event, the worldwide passion for Kennedy that would just flow instantly. In fact, I had planned to go back to the home district and have some appointments during the funeral period. But my staff quickly convinced me to stay around there and attend the events, which I did. I'd been critical of Kennedy. This was my conservative period. The awakening would come a little bit later.

DePue: Let's talk about another event in foreign affairs. This would have been a few months before Johnson was reelected. Johnson's been president for maybe eight months or so by this time, August in 1964, and the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which led to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. I know that's something you felt strongly about. So, I'd ask you to talk about that, from the perspective of '64, and maybe not to get too far ahead of the story here.

Findley: I was very concerned about war powers, then, as today. I was also concerned about the presidential use of war powers without Congressional sanction. And we were building up forces without Congressional declaration of war, at that time. Here this incident was very much in the news. The whole Congress was convinced that we ought to pat the president on the back and show unity with him in this crisis.

There was no time for debate, from my standpoint. I wasn't on the committee, though I might have been able to get one minute. It came to the House floor with a closed rule, no amendments, just up or down vote. I'm sure that LBJ had a big hand in writing the language of the resolution of support.

DePue: We probably should back up just a bit and say this is essentially: American naval vessels off the coast of North Vietnam were allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese gunboats. The question was whether or not they were outside or within territorial waters. Of course, those were the different positions of the two governments. But that was the origins of the conflict, correct?

Findley: Yes, but it was also an opportunity for LBJ to lock in support. The total time was thirty minutes on each side. It was quickly up. I went to Gerry Ford, who was a Republican leader at the time, asked him if I could have a minute. I just wanted to raise a question: Is this tantamount to a declaration of war? He said,

"Oh no, it's not that at all. Don't worry about it." He didn't have any time to give me anyway, but he brushed aside my concern.

DePue: This is going to be a rough translation of what the resolution was about. But, it happened on August seventh. Congress passed a resolution, drafted by the administration, authorizing all necessary measures to repel attacks against U.S. forces and all steps necessary for the defense of U.S. allies in Southeast Asia. Does that sound about right?

Findley: Yeah, that's it. That was very broad. It didn't say, declaration of war, nothing quite that precise. "All necessary measures," that's pretty elastic. It depended on the viewpoint of the person using the word. I was not really concerned at that point, but it soon proved to be the case that there was no attack, that our vessels were not shelled, not harmed. It was contrived by the administration. And I guess the military people cooperated with it for a while, but it quickly was clear that there was no provocation.

But LBJ kept a copy of that resolution in his jacket pocket from that day on. And, if anybody ever brought up the idea, well, this Vietnam War was never declared, never a proper exercise of war powers, he would pull this out and read that section, about all necessary measures. And he got by with it. No one really pushed too hard.

DePue: But it would be unfair to suggest that we weren't already pretty heavily involved with South Vietnam before that.

Findley: That's right. We were heavily involved there.

DePue: Especially in the advisory capacity and in terms of diplomatic measures.

Findley: Moreover, there were other nations, combined with us in that struggle.

DePue: Even before the Gulf of Tonkin.

Findley: Oh yeah, yeah. It was kind of an international operation. I was very uneasy about it, but the only negative votes occurred in the Senate. There were two of them there.

DePue: Does that mean that you voted for the resolution?

Findley: I did. I did and regretted it and said so, publicly.

DePue: How long afterwards did you begin to regret your decision to vote for it?

Findley: Well, it was when it was, obviously, a frame-up, a contrived—

DePue: Is early '65 or '66 then?

Findley: At least as early as that, yeah.

DePue: Before we get to that, we're going to have a lot more discussion this morning on Vietnam. But, I wanted to ask you a couple quick questions about the '64 election. Did you have much of a battle, yourself, in that particular election year?

Findley: Let's see, '64. Sixty-two, I had a big battle, and I won.

DePue: It sounds like that was probably your most significant election.

Findley: Oh, it was. It was. Sixty-two, Barry Goldwater was nominated. I didn't go to the convention.

DePue: Sixty-four.

Findley: Sixty-four. I admired Goldwater immensely. I didn't think he had a chance to win, and I didn't go to the convention as a delegate, which I could have done. In fact, our family took a little holiday and a cruise, from New York down to San Juan and back. It was a delightful experience.

DePue: Did you approve of Goldwater's position on Vietnam?

Findley: Well, it was not as bellicose as LBJ said it was, but I felt that, if we're going to be in a war, that we should mobilize the whole country in every way possible, no exceptions, and put the full force of America behind the troops in the field. I forget how far Goldwater went. I think he threatened nuclear war. I'm not sure. I just am not sure.

DePue: What a lot of people remember today about that election is probably the most famous political ad in American history.

Findley: Yes, the petals.

DePue: Yes, the girl out in the field, picking the petals off of the flower, and then, the mushroom cloud behind her.

Findley: Yes. LBJ ran on the theme that he would never use nuclear weapons, but implied that Goldwater might. I'm sure he believed it, and I'm glad for that. It was a rough campaign, but it was lopsided.

DePue: Which Republican had you been backing, before the convention selected Goldwater?

Findley: Nelson Rockefeller, yes. I backed him several times. I felt that he could unify the nation. He had a good relationship with blacks, which our party did not have then, or now. But we remained, believe it or not, on good, friendly terms.

When two plane loads of supporters came from my district for a long weekend, Goldwater immediately accepted an invitation to speak Saturday night to the group, and he was a big hit, jovial, very. He was a good man.

Another time, he accepted a private plane ride to come to speak at McClellan Hall at MacMurray [College], where there was an enormous crowd because of his appearance. I had the privilege of introducing him, and it was a very wonderful evening.

DePue: So, he helped your campaign in '64.

Findley: Oh, yeah. Well, '64, no. It was '66, probably.

DePue: Okay.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: So, in that year, he wasn't under the pressure of trying to get himself elected.

I wanted also to ask you a few more questions about Abraham Lincoln, because you still carried the mantle of an incredible admirer, a deep admirer of Abraham Lincoln. So, let's get to the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. That would have been 1963.

Findley: That would have been '64, wouldn't it? '63?

DePue: January 1, 1863 was the date that the Emancipation Proclamation went into an effect. It was announced in September of '62.

Findley: Okay, now I remember. I wanted to tie myself to Lincoln every way I could, so I got the Park Service to loan me the inkwell that Abraham Lincoln used when he signed it [the Emancipation Proclamation]. And on my journey home, I landed at St. Louis. My family was up in Pittsfield. I took the little tiny box that had the inkwell in it—the cardboard box was just big enough to accommodate the inkwell—and I put that on the little tray by the phone where I made the call, and walked away and forgot it, momentarily. When my oversight dawned on me, I rushed back fast. It was gone. I had a sinking feeling, of which I've never encountered since. I said, that is surely going to defeat me, among other things. But, to think that I would be guilty of careless handling of a precious heirloom of Lincoln, that was just too much. I could imagine Pete Mack making fun of me as irresponsible every day until Election Day, and I wouldn't have much of an answer to it. But, I called one of the main TV stations and told them about the plight and asked them if they would mention it on the evening news, that the Lincoln inkwell had been picked up by mistake by someone.

There are people today who probably tour the public phones, in any public place, just to check to see if there are any coins to pick up, and this kid

probably did that. Anyhow, the father of a young man who had done that, heard the broadcast and said that his son had come in with this funny little inkwell. He didn't know much about it, but, obviously, that was the one that was missing. So, this made TV news of a rather embarrassing sort. But at least it led to the recovery of the inkwell. I made sure that the Interior Department was custodian of the inkwell on its return to Washington.

DePue: That had to have been one of the most relieved experiences you ever had in your life.

Findley: Oh, boy. (laughs) Yeah, I didn't know how I could ever recover from that. I had an awful time, because it was about a two-hour drive up to Pittsfield from the airport. So, I had two hours of agony. But, by then, Lucille had received a call from the police, certifying that they had recovered the inkwell. (laughs)

DePue: Wow. Well, that in itself adds a lot of luster to the inkwell, itself. Do you know where the inkwell is now?

Findley: At that time, it was at Ford's Theatre. The Ford Theatre was largely a museum. There is now a museum, under the Ford Theatre, which is beautiful. It may be there. I'm not sure. But Interior Department has it.

DePue: Tell us how you came to write a book on Lincoln.

Findley: I don't believe that I ever made a speech, during the campaign, in which I failed to mention Lincoln in some way and to associate my career with him in some tiny, remote way. I gave the same speech, probably, a hundred times in a two-year period, including an opportunity to give it on primetime channels, Ten in Quincy. I know that, for various reasons I set forth in a memoir book, I wouldn't have made it to Congress without him. He was that much of a supporter and influence to me. I knew that, in his one term in Congress, he represented part of Illinois that I represented, not the whole district, by any means, but Menard County was close by Athens, and that's rich in Lincoln lore.

I expected that the next redistricting would put Springfield in my district. It was a district that had two sitting members of Congress in it: Peter Mack, a Democrat, no enemies, whatever, a long tenure, and I, a Republican, were in the same district. So, we had to run against each other. I think Pete Mack was sure he was going to win, and most of the other people in Illinois were sure he would win too, but I did. (coughs)

It was a much watched campaign. The *Wall Street Journal* carried stories about it. I think much of the national media considered it one of the rare places where two members were put together. It was obvious that both of us were putting on pretty strong campaigns. But, I felt that I could overcome the odds, and I did.

DePue: How is that related to the writing of the book, then, on Lincoln?

Findley: Well, let's see. I believe my book was published in '39.

DePue: In '69, you mean?

Findley: Sixty-nine, yes. I had become a close friend of Paul Simon, who is also a great Lincoln fan and had written an excellent book about Lincoln in the state legislature. I'm not sure when Paul Simon first reached Washington, but I wanted very much to write a book about Lincoln's one term in Congress, because I had long before come to the conclusion that the other biographers had not given him proper recognition of how important his term was to the party and to Lincoln's own career.

DePue: There's an irony, too, because the issue that he was soon embroiled in dealt with the war with Mexico.

Findley: That's right. That's right. And we were embroiled in a contest, undeclared war, in Vietnam. So, war powers were very much a part of my campaign. I was, by then, on record as a very conservative member of the House. I'd voted against most of the Kennedy program, as well as much of the Johnson Great Society program. But, I had done other things of a positive nature that, I guess, counterbalanced that, to some extent.

I was a strong supporter of farming, which was the heart of my district. At that time, most farmers, like myself, felt that the less government had to do with the planting and the marketing of farm products, the better off the farmer would be, the government would be, and the consumer would be, too. So, my endeavor to get government out of farming was very popular, and I'm sure that helped tremendously. Pete Mack was not known as a rural congressman. I was.

DePue: So, for all of those reasons, writing the book on Lincoln seemed to be the logical thing to do.

Findley: Especially because I knew that Paul Simon would surely write a book about him in Congress, if I didn't. I wanted to get there first, and I did. Paul Simon proved to be a very thoughtful friend. He didn't resent it at all. In fact, before I sent the manuscript to the printers, Paul Simon read every word and made many corrections. He had been a well-known author of a number of books by then and would write some more. He not only edited my manuscript, but he wrote a very sincere and cute introduction. Have you seen it?

DePue: Yes. Well, if I get my timeline right, you published this book, you said, in '69. That's during the timeframe that Simon was lieutenant governor, so he had some time on his hands.

Findley: Yes, as all lieutenant governors have.

DePue: Okay, one other question about Lincoln, then, and that's the work you did to save Lincoln's home.

Findley: My second term, in which I defeated Pete Mack, Lincoln was a major theme of my campaign. I did not, at that time, have a specific plan about bringing it into the National Park Service, but I never neglected Lincoln any day during the campaign.

At that time, across the street was a big, two-story, old brick building, which was a souvenir shop. There was one right next to the home, on Eighth Street. A promoter wanted to build a tall apartment building just across the side street from the Lincoln home. The Lincoln home would be in the shadow of this building. I thought all those things were desecrations of what John Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary, described the Lincoln home as "the precious heirloom of the republic," and I think many people felt that way about it.

The home, itself, was the property of the State of Illinois. The surrounding area, a lot of that land, was the property of the City of Springfield. The rest of it was in private hands and not well kept. There was a large law office building where the parking lot is today. So, I decided that I would try to get something going.

When I was in Pittsfield, before I became a candidate, there was a man who…maybe I can bring up the name, but he was a private citizen who had a series of…he had a canned program that he gave to every Chamber of Commerce he could. This one centered on what had been done to celebrate the homes of presidents of the past, and the finale showed how the Lincoln home was just…the neighborhood is falling apart. (coughs) That gave me an idea that I acted upon when I had a chance. I tried to interest Nelson Rockefeller in it. By then, I was one of his supporters. He was a part of the institution that controlled…what's the—

DePue: Would he be governor at the time?

Findley: He is governor at the time, yes. But, in his private charities, he was (coughs) a partner of the development of ancient colonial days. I can't even think of his name.

DePue: Was the name Williamsburg, perhaps?

Findley: Yeah, that's it. I told him about Lincoln, and I wondered if the same pattern of private giving could be constructed to support the Lincoln home. Rockefeller sponsored a breakfast at his property in Washington one morning. About a dozen people from

President Richard Nixon signed the Lincoln Home Historic Site Act at the Old State Capital in 1974. Present were Governor Richard Ogilvie and Congressman Paul Findley.

Springfield—the kind of leaders of historic commemoration there—had breakfast with Nelson Rockefeller, hoping that they could interest him in digging in his pocket to help. He was the speaker at the annual dinner of the Abraham Lincoln Association in Springfield, and he spoke favorably about the renovation. But he never really grabbed it as a personal project.

There was a man with the Park Service. I hope I can call up his name. He came to Springfield and gave a very moving presentation about how important it is to maintain the integrity of souvenirs of past greatness. It really impressed the group.

By then, I had decided that the best hope was to get the federal government interested. I assumed that there'd be a long period of time, probably get an authorization one year, and then start working on the Appropriations Committee to hope that they would begin to help finance it. So, with the help of the Park Service, I put together the bill to authorize it, a copy of which is on the wall here.

Everything turned out to be just right. Dick Ogilvie, Governor of Illinois, was encumbered with budget problems. He wanted the Lincoln home preserved, but he wanted to get it out of the state budget. (chuckles) The Mayor of Springfield, Nelson Howarth, immediately gave his full support. The support of those two men was very critical.

Then, I had to talk to Chicago Democrats in the House of Representatives, because several of them had taken a keen, deep interest in the Lincoln home when they were in the state legislature. None of them put up a fuss. I got every member of the Illinois delegation, both parties, to sign on the bill…and both senators.

But, the Executive Branch wrote the bill finally. I assumed that there would just be an authorization, but I got word from the White House that they would like to attach an amendment to it that authorized some…I think $3-4 million. It would authorize the appropriation of money. So, that was a great break, and it just sailed through. Everything clicked. I never had any idea, legislatively, that worked as smoothly as the Lincoln home.

DePue: I think it illustrates that, if you're an Illinois politician, you feel an obligation to get right with Lincoln.

Findley: Yeah. (laughs)

DePue: And also, that I can't think of any other president that other presidents also have to get right with. They have to make some connection with Abraham Lincoln.

Findley: They all wrap the cloak of Lincoln around themselves, as I did. And it worked.

DePue: Well, now we get back to some foreign affairs again. In some cases, I know you are going to be heavily involved, and some others, perhaps, not so much. Nineteen sixty-seven, June 5th through June 10th, that's the Arab-Israeli War, or what some people call the Six-Day War. At that time in your career, did that one resonate with you?

Findley: No. No, I was aware of it. I was new on the committee. Everybody saluted Moshe Dayan. He was the hero of the day. The military reputation of Israel was just riding high, and I just had a faint idea about the lobby for Israel. I'd had no bad experiences with it. I had this one moment on the House floor when—I think his name was Frank Wolf—a New York Democrat announced to the House members that there had been an unfortunate misidentification of a vessel, and, because of that flaw, the Israelis has mistakenly sunk or attacked a ship, hadn't sunk it. There was hardly any murmur of discussion. Nobody asked questions about it. It was presented as trivia, because he [Frank Wolf] also said that Johnson had accepted their apology and that they would pay some reparations.

DePue: This is the *USS Liberty* you're talking about.

Findley: Yes, yes.

DePue: Which was attacked in international waters, was it?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: Off the coast of Egypt.

Findley: Yes, yes. There are some things that are a little bit unclear and, maybe, will always be. There is some evidence that the White House or the Defense Department warned or tried to warn the *Liberty* captain that there would be the danger of trouble, and he should move away further from the coast. I think the captain said he never got that message, but, in any case, they simply patrolled the waters in a normal way, believing that being in international waters would protect them from any military involvement.

Now, I don't recall that the *Liberty* came to my attention until several years later. On an overseas trip I took a copy of the book written by James Ennis, who was the deck officer of the day when the assault occurred. I read the whole book on the trip. I was astounded at what I learned. It was really a revelation. Little by little, I'd have evidence of the growing influence of the lobby for Israel, on the Hill, and I deplored it, publicly.

DePue: We're going to touch on this a lot, I'm sure, later, as we get farther into your career. But, one question that I would have for you about the attack on the *USS Liberty*, at that time. It was explained as a mistaken identity, that they thought it was an Egyptian ship. Would there be any other reason, rationale,

for why the Israeli military would attack an American ship, their chief supporter?

Findley: One of the crew members, who still survives, a commissioned officer—I think his name is Davis—said that he believed the—let's see, what was his theory?—he believed that, by destroying the ship, without a trace, the American public could easily be persuaded that it was an assault by the Arabs, and that would create such a storm of outrage—sinking a ship with everybody aboard—that they would instantly go to war on the side of Israel. Now, Israel had already virtually won the war, but this would solidify their relationship with the American public—anti-Arab and pro-Israel—for years to come. That could have been the theory, the reason why they attacked.

DePue: It's interesting that we just got done talking about the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

Findley: Yeah, that's right. Yep.

DePue: Well, again, we're going to get into a lot more about your views about the Middle East later. It's interesting, though, at that point in time, it still didn't really resonate with you much.

Findley: Not a bit. I accepted the idea that it was a mistake and that Johnson had accepted their apology.

DePue: The Vietnam War, then, let's get back to that.

Findley: By the way, I had communication with Dean Rusk over the years of his retirement. His first reaction, when I raised it with him, was, "Well, great powers sometimes have messy things happen, and they just have to overlook them and go ahead." But his later correspondence—I have a copy of the original of it—he said that there was no doubt in his mind that it was deliberate.

DePue: Dean Rusk, at the time, was Secretary of Defense?

Findley: He was Secretary of State.

DePue: Secretary of state.

Findley: He was a terrific guy. He was one of the best picks that Kennedy made. So, he had the agony of living through that '67 episode. He was still Secretary of State with LBJ.

DePue: I don't know how he could have made that mistake. McNamara was Secretary of Defense.

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Which, I'm sure, we'll be talking about a little bit here, as we get back into the subject of the Vietnam War. You mentioned already that, in the early years—and you certainly said this in your book, as well—that you were something of war hawk, a supporter of the Vietnam War. But also, maybe from that position as a hawk, I want you to tell us about your initiatives, trying to have amendments—which I guess became known as the Findley Amendments—blocking food sales and most favored nation status to some Warsaw Pact countries.

Findley: And I had a lot of success. The public sentiment was with me on those amendments. Democrats jumped on with yes votes as frequently as the Republicans did.

DePue: Can you flesh that out for us a little bit. Explain what that was really all about.

Findley: Well, we were at war with Hanoi. Hanoi had the sympathy and support of the Soviets and the Chinese. For his own personal reasons, there were times when LBJ wanted to disregard the war in Vietnam and try to open up a cordial relationship with the Warsaw Pact countries in Europe, including Yugoslavia. Anyhow, my objective was to try to stop any aid to countries that also were engaged in aiding Hanoi, and there were a lot of them that were doing it.

Years later, I went to Yugoslavia for just a couple of days with a bunch of other members of the House. (chuckles) One of the fellows came up to me and said, "I've always wanted to meet you, because I always thought it was very exceptional that anybody in the United States would try to stop food sales to any country on earth that needed food." And here I had done it. Now, Yugoslavia was very sympathetic to Hanoi, but the State Department and the Department of Agriculture both were glad to have Food for Peace go to those countries; that would enable them to get food at very attractive rates, very low interest rates and low price.

There was one time when Orville Freeman, Secretary of Agriculture, worked out a deal to sell, I believe it was durum wheat, to the Soviet Union. The sales price was much more attractive than the government was willing to sell any of this durum wheat to millers here in this country. I thought that was just awful. So, I got an amendment adopted that survived several challenges and kept the House in session until Christmas Eve one year, all because of me. (laughs)

DePue: I think we did talk about that briefly last time.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: My curiosity is, how did this play with your farmers in your district, because this is expanding markets for them. You sell more agricultural products, and it improves their prices.

Findley: Farm Bureau was very supportive of what I was doing. I know, one time, I hauled in an armload of letters from Illinois farmers, opposing discounted sales to the Soviet Union. So, I was on the side of farmers with that. I took two thousand letters and took them into President Kennedy's private office. His secretary, Miss Lincoln, said, "Now don't hurry away." This was shortly after he became president. She said, "I know that the president is coming. His car is coming in the driveway now, and I know he'd be glad to meet you and talk to you about the mail you're getting." It turned out he went straight to his family quarters and had lunch. (both laugh) So, I didn't see him, but it was a funny little episode.

But I did meet LBJ on a stairway in the White House. I was still lugging those letters on my way to the presidential office, and LBJ very gruffly wanted to know what I was doing there and what the letters were about. Then, he just ignored it and went on.

DePue: It sounds like this incident would have been earlier than your objections to Warsaw Pact countries supporting Vietnam.

Findley: Oh yes, yes, but it was part of the same pattern.

DePue: How about most favored nation status? Was that also part of this argument?

Findley: Let's see. Poland was not cooperating with us on food. They were part of the Warsaw Pact group, and I offended them greatly when I recommended that Romania, which had been showing a spirit of independence of Moscow, received normal trade relations standing and that it would be denied to Poland. (laughs) It bothered Romania, too, because I was on good terms with the ambassador. He said, "Aw, don't punish the Polish government, just because you're going to gain a trade advantage for Romania." He was a little embarrassed that I was tying the gain I wanted him to have, to the minus that would affect Poland.

Congress had, at that time, quite a number of Polish extraction members. Ed Derwinski was one of them. They defended my amendment, whenever Poland was to be punished. Because of that, I didn't succeed always.

DePue: How about the special case of Yugoslavia? You mentioned that countries in the Warsaw Pact were trying to distance themselves from the Soviets. Certainly Yugoslavia and Joseph Tito would be the ultimate example of that?

Findley: They weren't at that stage. They were eager to receive food from the granary of the U.S. government, but they also were sending some food aid to Hanoi. That reached the very top of the State Department. Dean Rusk was…I guess he was absent. That was still LBJ, but Dean Rusk, I believe, stayed on through LBJ's terms in office. I can't remember that name too carefully.

DePue: Can you explain what changed your views about the Vietnam War? Was this a gradual thing, or is there a moment of realization for you?

Findley: Well, several things troubled me greatly. LBJ liked the term, "measured response," as if, what we should do is just kind of slow them up, but not defeat them. I believed that, if we get into a war, we ought to try to win it. And, if winning was not a prospect, we ought to get the hell out. That's the change that came to me. It was obvious that our conduct of the war in Vietnam was not succeeding. It was losing, and there was no prospect that there would be a change to the better, from our standpoint.

DePue: But, by the time you get to 1966 and '67, especially late in the year of 1967, you had people in the administration—McNamara himself and General Westmoreland—making predictions that we're winning the war.

Findley: That's right, always a light at the end of the tunnel. A little touch of Illinois history: Otto Kerner was Governor of Illinois, a highly respected man. He had been an officer, and he looked like an officer. He spoke for the entire delegation of governors at a luncheon meeting, with LBJ in the White House that I attended, along with a bunch of other members. He did such a superb job of speaking for the governors at that luncheon that I had a new respect for him as a leader. That was before trouble came.

DePue: You mean trouble for him?

Findley: Trouble for him. Before I left the House, I believe there was a ceremony at the Lincoln home. It may have been when Gerry Ford spoke or possibly Nelson Rockefeller, he also spoke there. I believe, by then, Otto Kerner was under indictment. I'm not sure about that. There was a time when I tried to issue a welcoming hand to Kerner at something at the Lincoln home. I'm not sure when it happened, though. I'm sorry I brought it up.

DePue: The timeline for Kerner was, he was governor from '61 until '68. He led the Kerner Commission about the civil disobedience and so forth.

Findley: Oh, yes. I was there when he led that, and I thought it was such a splendid job.

DePue: Then he resigned the governorship and became a judge, sitting on the U.S. Seventh District Court of Appeal.

Findley: I forgot that.

DePue: It was while he was a sitting justice—well after the time he was governor—that he was indicted. So, that happened in the early '70s. I think '73 was when he was convicted.

Findley: Anyhow, I did respect him. I just had a hunch that he paid the price for an underling's mischief. I think he did, but he did it with dignity.

DePue: The other interesting thing—getting back to the subject of Vietnam—he had served in the same artillery regiment with William Westmoreland in World War II and was a very close friend. In fact, he visited Vietnam and had a little bit of a reunion with Westmoreland.

Findley: Westmoreland was at this luncheon. That would account for the fact that Kerner was chosen to speak for the governors. (both laugh)

DePue: It's interesting how these connections are made sometimes, isn't it? Okay, getting back to 1967, I think in that year you voted against the extension of the draft? Is that right?

Findley: Yes. I voted for an all-volunteer army. Shortly after that vote, an admiral on active duty called me, invited me to lunch down at the navy yard, and he congratulated me on that vote. He said, "The trouble with big armies is that generals always find a place for them to fight."

DePue: But, in the midst of the war, an increasingly unpopular war in 1967, why did you vote against the draft? Were you convinced that we needed to find a way to get out of Vietnam, by that time?

Findley: Yes, yes, that was it. One of the things I did was to introduce three bills simultaneously: One, full support of the way the war was going. One was to give it even more support, with victory in mind. The other was to withdraw. I was hoping the committee would take up all three and maybe decide to pass one of them onto the full body, but it didn't happen.

DePue: That sounds like you're frustrated that your colleagues weren't doing anything. They were being too passive?

Findley: Oh, very passive. We voted funds for the war, for equipment, for our troops and all of that, but we were unwilling to face up to the need for a war declaration. One of my three was war declaration.

I remember vividly the day that a very respected guy from St. Louis—whose father, James Simington, was in the Senate—got the attention of the House chamber after a quorum call. He said, "I want you to look around in this chamber. There are about four hundred of us here. That's exactly the number of soldiers killed yesterday in Vietnam." This was Simington speaking. Why he didn't pursue that very effective intervention, I don't know, but it was one of the most powerful speeches ever heard. You could hear a pin drop, because his point was that here we're sitting here doing nothing to change that, and a number equal to our membership was killed just yesterday, and we aren't doing anything today.

DePue: What I'd like to ask you to do here, Congressman. I found a passage here, I think this illustrates the straightforward approach in which you discussed these things in the book. You see what's highlighted there on the right-hand

side? If you could read that into the record for us, because this is…I believe September of '67—is what you're talking about here.

Findley: You know, I have trouble reading.

DePue: Would you like to have me read that, then?

Findley: Yeah, I would. I'd like to hear it, for one thing.

DePue: This is page one-fifty-five in the book, and it's in the chapter, "Agony, No Ecstasy." It's very much following along in this theme of how to exercise some power from even the House of Representatives.

Okay, here's the quote. "In September, I introduced House concurrent resolution 508, a milder resolution that I believed would attract more co-sponsors. It simply called for Congressional committees to report whether further Congressional action is desirable, in respect to policies in Southeast Asia. Within a few months, a hundred and forty-four House members, more than one-fourth of the total membership, were co-sponsors. By introducing these bills, I hoped to broaden my colleagues to measure up to what I believed to be the House's Constitutional responsibilities, under war powers. To my disappointment, none led to committee hearings, much less committee recommendations. The experience convinced me that, except for Senator William Fulbright, committee chairmen, like the majority of other members, were content to duck their constitutional responsibility. They did not want to touch the prickly nettle of war powers. They liked to complain about presidential decisions on war making but preferred to avoid helping making timely policy themselves."

Findley: Amen.

DePue: Why mention William Fulbright, not a member of the House, but the Senate?

Findley: He led the Fulbright hearings on Vietnam. I believe they had an immense influence on public opinion and on the opinion of my colleagues. Finally, late in the day, we withheld money from administration use in Vietnam. We put a cap on expenditures.

DePue: But, that was—

Findley: That was later on, yeah.

DePue: Were you equally as critical of your colleagues in the Senate for being too complacent?

Findley: Yeah, sure, sure.

DePue: Okay, how much of this, the complacency or the lack of initiative, in either the House or Senate, was typical deference to the Executive Branch and the President of the United States, and how much was it connected with the personality of Lyndon Johnson, who had this reputation of being overbearing, very persuasive, got his way in Congress?

Findley: I think it was much more deep-seated. It showed a reluctance of the Congress to do its duty under the Constitution, not just today, not just that day, but in future events and past. It's a lot easier to let the executive make the tough decisions, and then, you can take pot shots at them afterwards. In fact, the cartoonist for the *Post-Dispatch* did a beautiful job on that very theme and thoughtfully sent me the original, autographed. This appeared during the very time when Vietnam was up for grabs.

DePue: That would be the kind of cartoon we'd like to include in the collection, then. We'll have to find that.

Findley: Well, it's on the wall of my son's house. He loves it as a souvenir. I could at least get a good copy from him.

DePue: Absolutely.

Findley: It'd be good here.

DePue: How did all of your growing opposition to the Vietnam War play with your constituents?

Findley: It was mixed. I would say my views were definitely in the minority, but they apparently… This may sound pompous, but I had my own personal, political organization, not in every precinct, although that was the goal. There were people that stuck with me, whether they agreed with me or not on public policy. They thought I was trying to do the right thing. But the spirit supporting the flag under battle is powerful.

Even today, hardly anybody on the Hill criticizes the Afghan War. There are some, but they aren't the majority, by any means. Their constituents, some of them in uniform, they don't want to appear to be demeaning what they're involved in.

I had a discussion, just the other evening, at Craig's house here. A Marine who is now in his third hitch in Afghanistan—as a part of a contractor, not as part of the Marine Corp—he's doing much the same work that he did on his first hitch. But, as the employee of a contractor, he's paid a lot more.

DePue: So, I'm assuming he's no longer a Marine.

Findley: That's right. I asked him if he really thought any good was going to come from this, if, when we left Afghanistan, would there really be an organization

of Afghans who were able to patrol the country and keep it free of terrorists. He said he didn't think so, hardly any indication of that.

DePue: Let's get back to the late '60s, if we can.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: This timeframe we're talking about, '67 and '68, is a timeframe when American public opinion is making some dramatic shifts on the subject, as well. But I want to finish off, before we get to '68, because I love to talk to people about that important year in American history. Your involvement with Clark Clifford becoming the new Secretary of Defense. Maybe you had no direct involvement with that, but then, how that tied in with this discussion about whether General Wheeler should remain as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Findley: Yep, I was lifted out of obscurity that day, (chuckles) because everyone assumed that it would be an automatic extension.

DePue: That what would be automatic?

Findley: I guess, in fact, this approval of an extension of the term—not of the Secretary of Defense, but the chairman of the joint chiefs—Wheeler. He had been in that capacity all through the Vietnam War, and we weren't getting anywhere. It just seemed absurd to me that we would want to give him any more time. There was no hope that he would change. So, I objected. I knew that the objection wouldn't hold, because, if they would bring it back up under approval by majority vote, that they could easily get that, or they could have a separate bill that would come up and easily be approved. So, I knew that Wheeler's term would be extended. But, it gave me a chance to bemoan the fact that we were not doing anything to bring the war to a desirable end.

DePue: What were your views of Clark Clifford, then, the replacement for McNamara? By that time, McNamara's own notion of being very analytical and structured and using all these business principals to run the military hadn't turned out too well.

Findley: No, that's for sure. He even wrote a book, subsequent to that, in which he admitted that he knew it was a hopeless war several years before he left the job. That was terrible, to admit that in public print. I can't imagine. He had lost his bearings, I think. He was honest, I'm sure.

DePue: Did you have any relationship with Clifford?

Findley: Yes, a little bit, because by then…The Camp David, had that been finished?

DePue: No, that was later, because Clifford was LBJ's.

Findley: Anyhow, Clark Clifford was frequently representing the State Department before a subcommittee on the Middle East that I was on, and those huddles were very small. He always was very impressive. He spoke very deliberately, very slowly. At that time, we knew he wore $400 suits. Today, they're commonplace. (chuckles)

DePue: Today, they cost a lot more than $400.

Findley: Yeah, they sure do. (laughs) I admired him. I read his memoir, *Counsel to the President*, the story of his association with Harry Truman. He was his close legal affiliate, all through his term as president. I think he had quite a handle in naming the new country, Israel, and in seeing to it that the U.S. government was the first to recognize the new state. I didn't like that part of his career, but he was considered the top lawyer in D.C.

DePue: Well, let's get back to the events of 1968. I'm going to walk you through a series of rather famous events now, momentous events. The first one is January 23 of 1968, the *Pueblo* incident. This is where the North Koreans seize an intelligence ship. So, I guess we've got a theme today, Congressman. This is the third ship we've been talking about that's involved with a foreign incident.

Findley: It was almost a duplicate of *USS Liberty*.

DePue: Any thoughts come to mind about the *Pueblo* incident? In this case, the North Koreans did seize and retain that. The question, immediately, was, were they operating under the proxy of the Soviet Union?

Findley: The Chinese seized it, yeah…No, the North Koreans.

DePue: And their closest ally was China at the time.

Findley: Yeah, their only ally.

DePue: Let's get to the next one here. We had just talked about how, by the end of '67, you heard lots of promising things about how the war in Vietnam was going.

Findley: Oh, on *Pueblo*, I did not talk to Commander Bucher at that time, but I did later. He said, had the truth about the *Liberty* been known when it happened, that he was convinced that the *Pueblo* would not have been in that danger, that the powers that be in DOD [Department of Defense] wouldn't have let it be so close to capture. He said the lessons of the *Liberty* should have been passed through the chain of command and alerted Bucher, as captain of the *Pueblo*, exactly what happened to the *Liberty*, and therefore, to be very watchful.

DePue: The next event, right at the end of January, is the beginning of the Tet holiday season in Vietnam and the beginning this year, in 1968, of the Tet Offensive.

Do you remember your reaction to the Tet Offensive? And, seeing this major uprising by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and attacks on Hue and other cities, your impression of how the war was going at that time?

Findley: I'm sure that I have a book here, which is a compilation of everything I said about Vietnam and did about it. My recollection may be faulty, but to me, it was the tipping point. It just showed that we had no chance, even by increasing personnel there—putting people, more people into battle—that we'd made a big mistake making war there, and we ought to get out.

DePue: I'm sure you've heard this stated over and over again, as far Tet is concerned, that militarily, the United States, won, won in a big way. The Viet Cong were decimated. The North Vietnamese were stopped. We were victorious. Your reaction to that?

Findley: I didn't believe it. It took an enormous toll in lives, and I think it was an event that led LBJ to ask for another hundred thousand troops, something like that. This looked to me like it was a hopeless battle.

DePue: The next event…I'm not sure of the date here, but it wasn't too long after that, Johnson declares that he will not be running for reelection.

Findley: [directed to another person in the room] Are you leaving us?

Female: I am.

Findley: Bye-bye.

DePue: That Johnson will not be running for reelection. Was that a surprise to you?

Findley: I don't know. I probably had mixed feelings. But, it was proof that he had given up. He could have been elected, I think. I think he could have been.

DePue: This would have been in primary season for the Republicans, as well. Who, during the primary, were you supporting in the Republican side?

Findley: It was '67.

DePue: This would have been early '68.

Findley: Sixty-eight, Nelson Rockefeller, yeah. And I was sure he would find a way to shut the war down.

DePue: More confident than you were in Nixon's ability to do that?

Findley: Oh yes, yes.

DePue: April 4th, 1968—we've talked about this a little bit—but that's the day Martin Luther King was assassinated. We talked before about your decision to

advocate that he be buried in Arlington Cemetery. Your initial gut reaction when you heard that news, though, what was that?

Findley: I had never met him. I had heard a lot of derisive comments about him, his behavior, private life. I didn't realize at that time what a powerful impact he had made on the world. I didn't see him as a giant, as I do now. I knew it would cause a tremendous upheaval in the black community. They would have lost their king, their savior.

DePue: Were you repulsed by the explosion of violence that happened out of that?

Findley: I was very troubled by it, because it was right next door. It came pretty close to Capitol Hill. Wasn't this the burning of Washington, or was that…

DePue: I'm sure there was rioting in Washington, D.C. There was a score more of the major cities: Chicago, I would imagine, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis. I'm not sure about St. Louis, but Washington, D.C. would certainly have been one of the places.

Findley: Washington had a lot of looting, great violence. And during that period, I have to salute my staff leader, Bob Wichser. He lived on Capitol Hill with his wife, Pat. They decided to do some mentoring of young blacks in the nearby community. And he got a couple other staff members from my staff to spend evenings tutoring kids that were victims of the horror of the neighborhoods. Many of them continued to be under that good influence of Wichser and his team for at least two years after that. He saw the necessity for the white community to really put their arms around the blacks and start at lower ages.

One of the young men that he tutored became a member of my staff after that. We all loved him. He was a good worker. He had a routine staff job for a while. Then he was determined to be on his own. He learned to be an electrician, became a licensed electrician, got married, had a handicapped child born. I talked to him about a year ago. He's still a friend. The staff followed him through school. I think he wound up as valedictorian of the black school he attended, high school. All my team went to attend that, and I think I did, too. That was a byproduct of Martin Luther King.

DePue: The next major event, in '68, would have been, certainly, a lively primary season for both Republicans and Democrats, in particular, the Democrats. June 5th, though, is the night that Robert Kennedy was assassinated, right after the California primary victory.

Findley: It was a big surprise, a shock similar to Jack Kennedy's death. I attended services for him, too. I never really liked Bobby as well as I liked the other two brothers. I didn't have a close relationship with Jack, but what I did have, it was on the plus side. He was very congenial and thoughtful, listened when I talked. Now, Bobby always impressed me as sort of a single-minded prosecutor, not much of a touch of humanity about his behavior, but I'm sure I

missed it. I'm sure it existed, because he really ran a terrific campaign. He would have been elected president, I'm sure, had he lived. He would have been a good leader too, I believe.

DePue: I think that the way the news media was portraying this incident is that they were asking themselves, "John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, what's wrong with America?" Would that be a fair appraisal of how it was portrayed?

Findley: I didn't see it those terms. I thought it was a tragic period, and I deplored the violence. I was afraid we were in a desperate period, in which there'd be a lot of violence on the street indefinitely, and the rule of law would be lost. So, I guess I did see it that way.

DePue: Well then, you certainly must have been discouraged by what you saw coming out of Chicago in the Democratic Convention in August.

Findley: It was a shock for the political system. George McGovern. I did not really know George McGovern at that time. I knew that he had made what I thought was rather outlandish promises, in the way of benefits, if elected. But I came to know him after that and know him well. He, actually…I've got a letter from George McGovern, in which he complimented me highly on what I was attempting in the Middle East.

DePue: But are you one election ahead of us, because he was the candidate in 1972. Humphrey got the nod in 1968.

Findley: Humphrey did. Yeah, that's right. That's right. Seventy-two and '68, I mixed them up.

DePue: But the violence going on outside the convention hall was the thing that was garnering all of the attention.

Findley: Yeah, that troubled me greatly, "the storm troopers in blue," as Adlai Stevenson called them.

DePue: Are you more critical, then, of the way the Chicago police responded to that, than the protestors, themselves?

Findley: Well, I know that police have to guard against an overwhelming rebellion, but the reaction I have today was that it was excessive. Maybe I'm wrong.

DePue: How about the Chicago Seven? Did that get gnawing in your gut, as well?

Findley: I'm a little murky, but—

DePue: Some would say the Chicago Seven got the reaction from the Chicago police that they were wanting to get.

Findley: Could well have been. I didn't want the mobocratic spirit, as Lincoln once described it, to take over, but I also recognize the need for protest movements. I didn't approve of some of the things that Nixon did to try to pretend that they were all a bunch of bad people, because… (sighs) I guess I don't have any answers.

It's interesting that Hubert Humphrey was the nominee. The night he lost, Nixon wrote a long, handwritten note to his friend, Hubert. I was impressed by that. Then, Hubert and I became friends. I never imagined that would happen, but it did. We were brought together in my endeavor to end famine, world food supply challenge, which is still with us.

DePue: Famine in what country, again?

Findley: I was the author of the Title 12 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which gave land grant universities multi-year contract authority to try to improve the food production of poor countries. Hubert Humphrey helped me every step of the way. It became known as the Findley-Humphrey bill that had the biggest majority that any foreign assistance act ever received in the House of Representatives. It was a shoo-in, amazing.

I could remember days when they would try to get Nelson Rockefeller, then governor of New York, to make a few phone calls to get a foreign aid bill through the House. They were always difficult to pass. Yet, this one that Humphrey and I put together got this big majority. But we were tying it in to the land grant university experience, here in this country, and trying to apply that same technique to other countries.

McGovern and I became very controversial, after I left the House. He and I came together in the same cause. He was drawn into the so-called Arab side of the equation, and we got well acquainted. It's strange how history takes.

DePue: I think our next session, we're going to be talking a lot more about that whole issue. Continuing on with 1968, about the same timeframe, at the end of August, the Soviet tanks came driving into Prague, Czechoslovakia, to crush what they called the "Prague Spring," an attempt by people who weren't connected to the communist party to establish a new kind of government in Czechoslovakia. That was crushed by the Soviets in August of '68.

Findley: In August of '68.

DePue: Again, if these aren't ringing a bell for you, in terms of your personal views about it, that's fine. We can move on.

Findley: August of '68, Ike was in office. No, he was in the '50s, and this was '68.

DePue: LBJ is still president. This is right after the Democratic Convention. So, what's going on politically in the United States is kind of overshadowing foreign policy issues at the time. Congressman, that's fine. When we got to the general election, were you a supporter of your Republican candidate, of Nixon versus Humphrey?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: Do you remember any challenges in your own campaign that year?

Findley: I do not. I have to plead guilty. I have some gaps in memory. I just don't remember a contest in '68 that involved me. I was tied up in Nelson Rockefeller's effort to get nominated. That was '68. I think that was his last attempt. Did he try in '72? I don't think so. No, Nixon had his shoe in.

DePue: Let's finish with this question for you, then. March of 1969, you decided, apparently, to do something else that would shake people up in Congress and that was to enter the names of all of those who had been killed in the Vietnam War in the Congressional record. What led to that decision?

Findley: It was an effort to dramatize the price we were paying. I think *Life Magazine*…I think it still was going.

DePue: Yes.

Findley: I think they published an issue that had small pictures of all the war dead for a period of a week or something.

DePue: I think it was a week, yeah.

Findley: I thought it would probably be controversial, but I thought it would be a very dramatic, indelible message to the American people as to the enormous human cost of Vietnam. I thought I could easily get the list of the war dead names, service—Army, Marine Corp, et cetera—and home towns and get them all printed in the record. I didn't know how many there would be or how big a space it would take. I don't believe any member of the House ever had such a expanded notion of unanimous consent of request. But, at the end of business one day, I asked unanimous consent to introduce the list, which was a box of computer pages, and no one was there to object. So, they spent all night and part of the next day, coming out with that issue of the record. It caused some consternation. People were wondering, where's today's record? I had held it up, by that request.

Oh, backing it up a little bit, when I first made my request to DOD for the listing, one of my neighbors—whose name escapes me—out in Falls Church, Virginia, he knew me as a neighbor in the general area. He was there as one of the custodians of such records. He called me, and he said, "I'd like to talk to you as a private person, not as an official of DOD. I think it's a very

serious mistake for you to publish the names of the war dead." He wasn't being mean. He was actually trying to guide me from a mistake. But I didn't agree with him, and I told him that I appreciated his thoughts, and I just felt it's very important for the American people to know what is really happening to our population. He made no further comment. I got the list and finally got permission to have it in. I know it held up the printing of the record, because I think it took over 130 pages just to publish the names.

Now, some people were outraged that I had done it. They thought this was political use of a terrible death toll. But it became very popular, not just by people protesting against the war, but by individuals who wanted to have a copy of the Congressional record that listed their child as one of the war dead. I hadn't realized that there would be that passion, but it led to reprinting of that issue to supply the requests. But it also was used heavily in war protest movements. They would use it. Sometimes they had caskets they would carry across the stage and give a name to the casket, and they would read from my record issue the names. I know that that issue, the record, was a major influence. I think it helped shorten the war.

DePue: So, you're proud of having done that.

Findley: Oh, yes. In fact, I think that issue may possibly have been an inspiration to the Vietnam War Memorial. I don't know of any other memorial that printed the names of all the casualties.

DePue: The Vietnam War Memorial is, of course, arranged by the first death, chronologically, to the last death. Was your listing a chronological listing or an alphabetical listing?

Findley: I think it's chronological, because they kept adding names. The wall was built before all the war dead occurred.

DePue: That's probably a pretty good place for us to finish today, because we've already been at this for more than two hours.

Findley: (laughs) I didn't know that.

DePue: I think, the next session we've got more foreign affairs, and we'll probably get much more into the issue of the Middle East next time, as well. I'm certainly looking forward to that. Thank you very much Congressman.

Interview with Paul Findley

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Interview #5: March 11, 2013

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Monday, March 11, 2013. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today I'm in Jacksonville. To be precise, I'm at Illinois College, and I'm sitting across the table from Congressman Paul Findley. Good morning, sir.

Findley: Good morning.

DePue: It's been a little while since we last talked, but history keeps moving along, and we keep moving along, trying to record it, as well.

Findley: My recollection has probably changed in one week, too. (both laugh)

DePue: What I wanted to do today is start with, not necessarily some specific events, but to have you tell us about your Congressional staff. Let's start with a general question. How many people were you authorized to have on your staff?

Findley: When I first went there, there was a dollar limit on the total staff. I think there probably still is. They had sort of a Mickey Mouse system, though. Seven thousand dollars was the biggest salary I could give, but that translated into about fourteen thousand. Isn't that strange? I don't know why it was that way, but there was probably a long history. I always maintained a full staff in the district, Springfield, usually. For a while, it was Quincy. I could not have been more fortunate in the people I got.

The standout man is Steven Jones, presently a very popular, successful trial lawyer in Oklahoma. He defended Timothy McVeigh. He's fearless. He never backs away from controversy. With a smile, he always tells me to stay away from controversy, and I never did. He heard me speak at a political gathering, sponsored at the University of Illinois, for up and coming leaders of the Republican Party. I spoke, and he heard me. After that, he looked me up. I told him, "Well, when you're hunting for a job, let me know." He got

employment briefly on the Hill, with…who was secretary of defense? That's awful.

DePue: Are you talking recently?

Findley: Yeah, yeah, under Nixon.

DePue: Was it Laird?

Findley: Laird started, but it became a very young…Rumsfeld.

DePue: Donald Rumsfeld.

Findley: Yeah. He worked for Donald Rumsfeld for a couple of months. Then, he got the idea that maybe my staff would be more interesting. So, he let me know, and I had the leadership spot open at the right time. He served with me for a number of years, decided he ought to get into a private law practice and opened an office. Then he got lonesome and came back.

During the trial of Richard Nixon, he took a leave from his law office and came full-time to help me design and carry out an effort to substitute censure for impeachment. We came awfully close, I think. Had Nixon not said one more statement about his own relationship with the CIA, we could have won censure, and I think the country would have been better off. It didn't happen. But, anyhow, Steven Jones was always coming up with fresh, well-formulated ideas for action.

DePue: Was he based in Washington, D.C.?

Findley: Oh, he spent all of his time on my staff, although he had such a keen interest in politics that he showed up back in the home district a few times. I have a photograph of him marching in a parade in Quincy, Illinois. Inspired by Abe Lincoln, everybody was carrying a big, giant torch…torchlight parade, right down Main Street in Quincy. We did it two different Saturdays during that campaign. Steve was present for one of them.

I still talk to him. He has been the most loyal friend anybody could ever ask for, through the years, still is. So, he was at the top of the heap. He was a good leader. He chose personnel very carefully. When he stepped out for a while, Bob Wichser was one of his admirers. Bob was seeking a job on the Hill. W-i-c-h-s-e-r.

Bob took his place. Bob was not the brilliant idea man, but he was a steady, thoughtful guy that kept things going. For example, it was Bob Wichser who kept after me to do something about my constituent, locked up in south Yemen. If it hadn't been for Bob, I probably would have let it slip. But, Bob wouldn't let me forget it. He constructed a good many statements very well, and he loved every minute. He was probably a better manager of

the personnel than Steve Jones. Jones was deep in big ideas and writing them himself. Bob was more of the leader, administrator.

The staff, I have to admit, was too big, but the temptation to have extra help is irresistible. The money was there, and we filled every slot. We had to have a division between Springfield and D.C. The bigger staff, by far, was in D.C.

DePue: How many people altogether, roughly?

Findley: A dozen, maybe, sometimes thirteen or fourteen. We had a reunion of the Findley Trail Riders last June, and three of my secretaries from D.C. showed up for it. Two of them were there, almost from the day I started in the House, until the very end. The third one was there most of that time. I had great loyalty, very little turnover. There were a few bad apples that turned up. We just had to get rid of them. But, for the most part, we had a stellar gang that really believed in what I was doing.

DePue: Who was your top political adviser?

Findley: It was, I would say, always Steve Jones, if he was there. Bob Wichser would be next in line. Don Norton, head of the Springfield staff, most of the time. He had a brief tenure on the Hill, heading the Washington staff, but that didn't last long. He liked it better back in Illinois, so I wanted him back there.

DePue: Did you tend to take your own political advice, more so that some of your staff?

Findley: Yes. If Bob thought I was on the wrong track, or Steve, they would argue with me and talk me out of it, usually. It was a good relationship.

DePue: It sounds like, though, just listening to you talk, that the staff and you, personally, were much more in tune with policy issues and what was going on the floor of the House, than you were about political maneuvering.

Findley: Well, Steve was an exception. He'd no longer got on my staff, than he wrote a big memo, arguing why I should run for governor, a pretty persuasive case. I was the star of the Republican Party for a brief moment. But, I didn't want a statewide job. I preferred the closer relationship that was possible with constituents. Maybe I could have been nominated to be governor or U.S. senator, but I didn't want either, and it wasn't offered to me.

DePue: Okay, let's get back to those policy issues we were just mentioning here. When we left last time, you had talked quite a bit about the Vietnam War, about the release of all the names that eventually got onto the Vietnam Memorial. But I wanted to switch now into the Richard Nixon years and to get

your views about what Nixon was trying to do, first of all, with Vietnamization[52] and then with negotiations with the North Vietnamese.

Findley: He wanted us out of Vietnam. I don't think, on reflection, anybody would say that Vietnamization was a good idea, but at that stage, it seemed like one that would enable our troops to get out with flags flying, so to speak. It didn't happen that way, though. The last remnants were lifted by helicopter off the top of the embassy building in Ho Chi Minh City. It was a dreary experience, almost from the beginning.

At the outset, when Jack Kennedy converted about two thousand men, who were there as advisors, into a combat unit, I thought it was winnable. I just didn't know much about it. My thought was it was winnable, and we ought to do all we could to bring victory as soon as we could. I didn't favor bombing it back to the Stone Age, that one of the famous generals advised.

DePue: That would be Curtis LeMay.

Findley: Yeah. I remember when he told a small group of us that that's what we should do, bomb them back to the Stone Age. So much for human beings.

Very swiftly, I became convinced that it wasn't winnable, that we wouldn't put in the manpower, the lives, the blood that winning would take, and I shifted immediately to try to bring it down. I wasn't as brave as I should be.

One time, I introduced three bills. One of them approved the policies in Vietnam that were then in force. The other one favored swift withdrawal. The third one favored adding more military punch to get a victory. It was kind of a silly idea to have three different bills introduced, but I did it. I was hoping that that might cause the Foreign Affairs Committee to hold hearings on what we should do in Vietnam. We never, at any point, really came to grips with that basic question. We finally used a rather indirect device of shutting off funding. We never faced up to whether we should declare a war, and really go to bat, or to get out.

DePue: I know that Lyndon Johnson, himself—from what I understand—really wanted to avoid that discussion. And that was one reason he didn't want the National Guard and Reserve mobilized, because that would put it right back in the lap of Congress to discuss it.

Findley: He got the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which satisfied him that the final word had been stated by the Congress, to support what he was doing. It never mentioned declaration of war, as required in the Constitution. I have a bound

[52] a U.S. policy during the Vietnam War of giving the South Vietnamese government responsibility for carrying on the war, so as to allow for the withdrawal of American troops.
dictionary.reference.com/browse/vietnamization

volume here that is full of my role in the Vietnam War, from start to finish, and a lot of bills that I introduced, a lot of speeches I gave. My biggest single step was putting the list of the war dead in a single issue of the Congressional Record, which became a very important item for the protest movement. They would read from that list, endlessly, at some of the meetings. They would have caskets with names on them that they got from that.

DePue: Yeah, we talked about that quite a bit last session.

Findley: Yeah, okay.

DePue: So, that's why I wanted to kind of focus on Richard Nixon. So, let me ask you about his efforts at the peace table.

Findley: Let me back up a little bit. Steven Jones, did I mention that he was a researcher for Nixon?

DePue: No.

Findley: Nixon, after the California debacle, moved to New York and began planning his presidential race. He hired two researchers. One of them was Steven Jones. I don't know who the other one was. That experience really linked Jones to Nixon. He never gave up on him. He was his friend, supporter to the very end. He thought that Nixon hadn't done anything that wasn't exceeded by LBJ and some other presidents. He just got caught. So, he had great sympathy for Nixon.

I guess I did, too. I always liked Nixon. He never turned me down on anything that I asked for. He would send me complimentary little notes quite often.

I can remember the day when I was defeated. He was, by then, out of office. I had written a little note to him when his wife died. I knew her very well. I was around Nixon as much, even more than I was around Jimmy Carter. So, I was an admirer…not of his misdeeds, his stupidity in defending underlings who had made bad decisions.

DePue: I want to return to the Watergate situation, but before we get there, many of the things that Nixon was doing—and I think this is part of his attempt to figure out a way to get peace in Vietnam—dealt with his détente with the Soviet Union and China. I wonder if you can reflect on those, because, by this time in your Congressional career, you're very involved and interested in foreign affairs.

Findley: Sure.

DePue: So, let's start with the Soviet Union. Do you think his détente efforts, reaching out to Soviet Union, was at the right time? Was that a courageous thing to do?

Findley: Yes, I do, and he made great progress. (pause) I'm a little murky on a timetable.

DePue: Yeah, I don't recall the specific dates of the trip to the Soviet Union or the details of that negotiation.

Findley: He told me, on one occasion, that he felt that in dealing with the head of state, always be courteous and respectful of the position in public. Save the punches, the hard punches, for private discussion. He probably didn't follow that advice all the way through, but quite often, he did. I think he was pretty tough in negotiating with the Soviet leaders, during that period.

I didn't pretend to know everything going on behind…the peace conference, for example, that involved Nixon. My assistant, Steve Jones, to this day, believes that Nixon was close to a good deal with North Vietnam, when finally, in desperation, the Congress shut off the money. That's what brought it to an end. In fact, I express Steve's views in that book.

I think maybe I told you my impression of Nixon as a human being. He seemed almost furtive when he was with a group of people, even Republicans. He wasn't at ease with anybody. The only time he was ever at ease, that I experienced, was when I was in his office, talking to him. There were a couple of staffers there, but he was completely at ease.

I had been active in the Atlantic Council, the parliamentary group. One day, I went in to talk to him about NATO policy. I told him that Ike had told me, sometime before, that all we needed was one division in Europe. We didn't need four, which is what we had at that time. I reported that to Nixon, and he agreed. He saw the merit to the budget and cutting back, and just showing the flag with one division was enough.

He endorsed, on paper, the concept of federation. It's in a letter framed up here. The day he signed that letter was the day he first learned about the break-in at Watergate, so he had a lot of things on his mind. But still, he became the first president, in a public document, to support international federation, which really warmed my heart, because that was one of the reasons I ran for Congress in the first place. I was hoping to be able to take a few steps toward that goal.

DePue: In that respect, then, you wouldn't classify Nixon as a conservative by any means.

Findley: No, and he wasn't. He was tagged that way unfairly by the press, generally. He proposed the Family Assistance Act. Do you remember that? It was a remarkable, simple family assistance plan. Every year, the federal government, under this plan, would determine the income of each family and measure that against the poverty line and provide a grant sufficient to bring that family's income above the poverty line, a simple idea, one check a year.

It didn't get to the first base. I thought it was really a very thoughtful, effective system. But he got no credit for it. What could be more far-reaching than supporting international federation?

DePue: Well, on a different side of Richard Nixon—and this goes back to Vietnam and trying to figure out how to win that war, at least have some honor when the United States withdraws—in May of 1970, the administration decided they needed to launch an invasion into Cambodia.

Findley: I didn't like it, and there was a tremendous resistance to that, criticism, especially by veterans that had come back from Vietnam. They marched in Washington quite a bit. They occupied the Mall. My wife and I went out to the Mall one evening and sat with them and listened.

Congress, for some reason, the leadership of the committees didn't see fit to organize a hearing, where these young people could sound off and get some attention. So, I organized one on the House side. I had the cooperation of Dr. Morgan—who was then the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee—mainly because his chief of staff, Boyd Crawford, I had known since right after we came out of World War II. We had been friends. He handled things so that the record of those hearings, those ad hoc hearings, became official documents of the Foreign Affairs Committee, even though the committee, itself, never lifted a finger to provide the secretarial support and all that. It was a good move on my part. I thought it turned out very well.

We had two solid days of hearings, and they were orderly. Some of them came in wearing caps and wanting to lie on the floor and that sort of thing, but they finally straightened up and behaved properly. They had their day, and I think it helped to take the steam out of that movement. Several Democrats, including Fascell, a senior Democrat, cooperated with me.

DePue: What was the last name?

Findley: F-a-s-c-e-l-l. He was, later, chairman of the committee. Dante is his first name. He's dead now. Cambodia was the burning issue then. I think the country was pretty unified against it. I was against it. My little contribution to the cause was that two days of hearings.

DePue: What was your reaction to the news about Kent State, which is a reaction to the invasion of Cambodia?

Findley: Well, there was violence that was lethal. I didn't like that, but I didn't think we should try to stamp out all protests. It was a major event in the wind down of the war, just like my listing of war dead that had a great impact. They reprinted that issue of the Congressional Record, in order to supply the requests of members whose constituents wanted a copy. Some people thought it was so disgraceful to have a publication like that, it ought to be prohibited.

But, as it turned out, most families were pleased to have that recognition of service.

DePue: I want to turn attention now to China, and specifically, to what Nixon was trying to do with détente with China. But, even before that, I was surprised to read that May, 1967, you actually proposed normal diplomatic relations with China?

Findley: I proposed that, as a preparation to normalization, we begin dealing in food. I did that at Harvard. The Ripon Society, which is a group of—I guess they still exist—of sort of liberal Republicans, arranged a meeting for me in Harvard. I was immediately condemned by the *State Journal - Register*. I remember the headline of the top editorial that day, "Findley Wrong in China." To my amazement, though, the *Baltimore Sun* wrote an editorial, praising me for it. I'd never talked to anybody at the *Sun*, but they somehow got the idea that it was a good move.

DePue: To put this into context, wasn't this about the same time period that you were advocating that we should not be assisting countries that were sending weapons and sending munitions to North Vietnam?

Findley: I made a distinction between China and Vietnam, and maybe the distinction is pretty thin, but I didn't know. As long as there were men in the field, I felt we ought to do all we could to defend them. But, I also thought we ought to do all we could to get them out. So, I didn't see a contradiction between trying to normalize relations with China. In fact, I don't think I ever said normal. I said Vietnam, but I would have, had I stayed there in Congress long enough to make it timely.

DePue: Well, I'm going to press the point a little bit farther. Why is it different for us to provide food for China and not for, I think, Yugoslavia or Hungary or some of the Eastern Bloc countries?

Findley: I didn't have evidence that China was supporting Vietnam. It probably did, but I just didn't know about it. So, I didn't see it as a partner of Vietnam.

DePue: Obviously, newspapers like the *Springfield Journal - Register* didn't share that view?

Findley: No, they thought that China, being a communist state, was the enemy. I was beginning to realize that the communist label was one that ought to be examined pretty carefully. It meant different things, depending on whether it was Yugoslavia or Vietnam or China or Russia.

DePue: Sixty-seven, wasn't that the time period that already the Cultural Revolution was going on in China?

Findley: It was. It was a big upheaval, and one that was very radical, as I found when I finally had a trip to China and was able to find out more details. But I was wading into a controversial field. I also felt it made no sense for us not to have relations with one of the greatest nations on earth. I agreed with Churchill when he said that, when we secure…He saw diplomatic relations as securing a convenience, not conveying a compliment, and I felt the same way.

DePue: Was that the time period, we'd already had relations with the Soviet Union? Certainly, we were partners in World War II, but did we also have relations with all of the Eastern Bloc countries at that time? I'm thinking that we did.

Findley: We probably did. Of course, there were two Chinas. One was Chiang Kai-shek China; the other was Mao [Tse-tung] China. They were quite different. By the time I made my recommendation, it was almost laughable to think that the Chinese on Taiwan or Formosa would ever launch an assault on the mainland. There might have been a time when it might have worked, but that was long past.

DePue: But the Chinese who were in the United Nations, the Chinese that sat on the Security Council, were the nationalist Chinese.

Findley: That's right. They didn't deserve to be there, and I was glad when the change was made to shift their membership to PCR, People's Republic of China.

DePue: But just in terms of electoral dynamics that means that any proposals that we saw in the United States' best interest are even less likely to ever clear the Security Council. Wouldn't that be true?

Findley: Well, it brings up the whole subject of the UN, which is flawed.

DePue: The United Nations is flawed?

Findley: Yes. It's better than nothing, but it's still flawed. The veto power should have been dispensed with long ago.

DePue: It ought to be a straight up vote, a Democratic vote? This is a complex subject that I waded into, and I didn't necessarily mean to.

Findley: It is, yeah.

DePue: I did it anyway.

Findley: I don't think we should attempt to convert the UN to a federation. I think it's useful the way it is, but we can't expect it to be an effective agency of security. We have never armed the Secretary General with any military forces, as Winston Churchill at Fulton recommended. He thought that the Secretary General ought to have fighter plane squadrons that he could order to a troubled spot on his own decision, a very far-reaching idea, one of several that

Churchill had in that speech. The publicity about the speech related to the Iron Curtain and nothing else, but it was full of very thoughtful ideas, I thought. I thought that we ought to try to get a federation within the membership of the UN. But, to try to convert the UN into anything resembling a democracy or a republic, was just futile. It would destroy it.

DePue: What were your views, at the time, about recognition for Cuba, something that still hasn't occurred?

Findley: I should have been more active on that front. I tried to see Arafat in Cuba one day, because I'd never met him. I asked the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee to approve a trip that I would take there for that purpose, to meet with Arafat in Cuba. It kicked up such a storm that the leadership of the committee, Clem Zablocki—usually my friend on everything—was upset about it. I finally gave up, when I learned that Arafat was about to leave Cuba. But it was part of my endeavor to open channels with all important political centers, no matter who it was.

DePue: Does that mean that you are on record as advocating that the United States should recognize Cuba?

Findley: I'm not sure whether I was or not. I should have been. I salute George Ryan, the ex-governor of Illinois, for speaking up for normalization with Cuba and also for opposing the death penalty. I thought he really deserved good marks for those two deeds, but not for other things.

DePue: Well, we digressed from the original question, which was about China. That's perfectly all right. I know you took a trip, fairly early on, to China, as well. Maybe it wasn't that early.

Findley: When Nixon became president, I think it was about the time that I went to Harvard to speak to the Ripon Society.

DePue: That would have been before he became president. That was May of '67.

Findley: It was. So, it was well in advance of Nixon's initiatives to China. I wrote a letter to Kissinger the minute he became his national security advisor, trying to kindle his interest in some kind of a breakthrough with China. He thanked me for my thoughtful letter, which is all I expected. I was always giving the president or somebody in the cabinet a lot of advice that was unsolicited.

DePue: When did you make your trip to China?

Findley: It was '76.

DePue: So, this is after Nixon is already out of office.

Findley: Yes, it was, indeed. There had been a congressional delegation—mainly people on the Ways and Means Committee—made a trip to China, '75, I guess, or four. They actually had an interview, I believe, with Chairman Mao. He was incapacitated by the time we got there. We dealt with Deng Xiaoping, who had quickly become Mr. China, a leader of great skill and foresight. That's my view. He opened the door in a way that avoided turmoil and bloodshed. I didn't think that was possible, that China, a great communist power, would be able to loosen up and have private property and competitive markets and rapid growth and quite a bit of individual liberty. I think it's due greatly to Deng Xiaoping's national steps.

DePue: Since you mentioned that, I want you to tell us about Captain Phillip Smith and your efforts to get him released. How was he captured in the first place? Let's start at the beginning.

Findley: He had navigation trouble at night. He thought he was going south. He was going north.

DePue: He was flying a mission over North Vietnam?

Findley: Yes. He was in a fighter plane. He got over an island that was part of China and was forced to land. I don't think he got hurt in the landing, but he was immediately imprisoned and kept there for a long time. By the way, this is when Steve Jones was on my staff. He took a keen interest in Smith, and so did his family in Greene County.

I went to the Chinese embassy in Paris one day and handed, through the door, a letter to the Chinese government on behalf of clemency for Smith. I made a summer initiative to the government of Poland that had links with China. I don't think any of those initiatives got forwarded to Beijing, but I tried.

DePue: Did you have the approval of the State Department to be doing these, to making these proposals?

Findley: I don't know. Nothing unusual about it, so I'm sure I did. I hope so. I should have.

DePue: Nothing unusual about it. You mean that the congressmen are going out and pursuing, basically, what surmounts to diplomacy?

Findley: Well, probably not very many did, but I did. In fact, in respect to South Vietnam, I worked closely with the State Department, and Henry Kissinger gave me a nice letter that it was very useful. So, I'm sure I followed that same practice with China.

DePue: When was Captain Smith released, then?

Findley: He was released, I believe, on the day that Nixon arrived in China, on the first Nixon trip, or it might have been a day or so later, but it was connected with that directly. He was not released to their care. He was taken to the border of Hong Kong and released there. That was a big relief. I thought he was a goner. I really did. I thought China was such an immense country and probably had all kinds of incidents like this, and this would be skipped over. But they apparently were at a point when they wanted to do something that was friendly to the United States, just as south Yemen wanted to do something friendly to the United States when it got a prisoner out.

DePue: And, if you don't mind, we'll talk about that in a little bit. I wanted to ask your impressions of your trip to China, of the country, itself, and of the people that you met there.

Findley: I was astounded at the cleanliness of the country, of the disciplined character of the people. They had been effectively isolated from the outside world. We were sort of like prize animals at a county fair. When we would drive past, there'd be immense crowds down the sidewalks, three or four deep, all along the line.

Lucille and I wandered in a department store one day, and she opened her purse to get something out, and all these faces suddenly got over. They wanted to see what was inside her purse. They had great curiosity about the western world.

I made good friends at the Chinese embassy, immediately. For some reason, I don't believe there were others who did that.

DePue: This would have occurred on that trip in '75 you talked about?

Findley: No, not that swiftly. When they established a liaison office in Washington—they didn't call it an ambassador, just the chief of the liaison office—the staff there was elated at my courtesy and cooperation on small things. They never forgot me.

DePue: This sounds like the time period would have been still during the Nixon administration, when you first reached out to go to the office that the Chinese had in Washington, D.C.? Was that still during the Nixon years?

Findley: I wish I had my timeline. I might be able to answer these better. In the wake of my experience with the Ripon Society in Harvard and the great professor at Harvard who was the expert on the China—

DePue: Fairbanks?

Findley: Yeah, Fairbanks. Steve did a terrific job of preparing me for that Harvard speech. He got Fairbanks to invite both of us to breakfast that Fairbanks' wife

prepared one morning. (laughs) But I never had any doubts about the importance of direct diplomatic relations with China.

DePue: Okay, let's get back to Vietnam. I'm kind of jumping around a little bit, but the war, as it reached its conclusion, the peace talks were going on, and the peace talks bogged down. Then, Nixon made the decision just to kind of move things forward, we had to bomb Hanoi, bomb the north, a massive bombing campaign to push them over the edge to get to the peace agreement. Did you think that was an appropriate move on his part?

Findley: Well, Steve Jones believes—and I can't argue with him—he believes that Nixon was very close to a dignified settlement in Vietnam in Paris. I guess that, possibly, he could have avoided the embarrassment of our departure and, perhaps, the safety of a lot of Vietnamese, who maybe were slaughtered or drowned or left on boats. I'm not doing very well on your questions. I'm a little hazy about it all.

DePue: Okay, how about this one? Seventy-three, the withdrawal is basically complete. We hand over South Vietnam to the Vietnamese people. There's still a presence there, obviously. But in '75, there's a massive offensive by the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong in the south. At that point in time, there's a lot of clamoring for giving some more support to South Vietnam. There was a decision, I believe, to not fund any more military operations at Vietnam.

Findley: That's right. That was a critical moment for Nixon at Paris. The decision on shutting down the money may have been a wrong one, but I endorsed it. I was glad to see it happen, because I knew this meant we're going to get out.

DePue: So, even in '75, when the whole country is imploding, you weren't in support of more aid?

Findley: No.

DePue: And, of course, South Vietnam falls in April of '75. Some pretty graphic pictures come out of that.

Findley: It was a miserable time. I was miserable every day and all day, because I was getting word of wounded people from my district, of deaths, of funerals. A lot of communities were planting trees as memorials to war dead, and I would always be there to take part. So, it was always right at the doorstep, and it was a downhill path. There was no hope for better days. I didn't believe any of this talk about a light at the end of the tunnel, you know, McNamara talking about it. The man…I don't know whether shooting is desirable, but McNamara, by his own admission in his memoirs, had said, long before he stepped out, he knew it couldn't be won.

DePue: Let's talk about a very related issue, and that's about your involvement with the passage of the War Powers Act in 1973. So, this would have been going at the same time we finally think we are ending our involvement in Vietnam.

Findley: I don't believe we thought we were at the end. I'm just not sure, but I don't think so. But maybe you can prove, from that book, that I'm wrong.

DePue: I did want to read a passage here…not necessarily read a passage, but, when you were involved with this, you were saying that you wanted to ensure that two things were coming out of that War Powers Act. I'll read these two things, then, I'll kind of turn it over to you to let you discuss that. The first one, "…required a prompt, detailed, written notification by the president to Congress, whenever a decision was made to introduce U.S. forces." And your second, insistence that the War Powers Act "…declared the right of Congress, by concurrent resolution, to require the termination of any military operations undertaken by the president, without specific Congressional authorization."

Findley: Yes.

DePue: So, in other words, the president acted, and now it's going to end, unless he's coming to Congress.

Findley: That's right. Those were my two major contributions to the War Powers Act.

DePue: Where was the War Powers Act originating? Did it spring out of both the House and the Senate?

Findley: If my earliest version was not the first on the Hill, it was very close to it. It may have been the first. It was, as I recall, a requirement of prompt reporting on what was done, which was quite an advance, because there was no such thing required in the past. And, by the way, it has fallen into nothingness since.

I checked with the Library of Congress several years ago, and the reporting, by the president, within twenty-four hours, to the Congress, has been occurring, I think, religiously. But, guess what they do with the reports. They bundle them and forward them later on…maybe once a year.

DePue: You're talking about the executive branch.

Findley: Yeah. Well, it's the legislative branch that doesn't do anything with the reports. They just let somebody at the Library of Congress bundle them.

DePue: So, the legislative branch is receiving the report, but they're not distributing it.

Findley: Yeah. That always is the weak link in the war powers chain. Congress wants the role, but they don't want it very bad. They'd rather have the president take

the burden, make the decisions, so they can take a pot shot at him afterwards. That's human nature.

DePue: In 1973, when this is being discussed heatedly in Congress, what is your role? You're a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee?

Findley: Yes, and the committee that drafted the language, subcommittee.

DePue: Who took the lead in drafting the language in the House?

Findley: I think Clem Zablocki was chairman of that subcommittee, as well as chairman of the full committee. He was much more cautious than I. Consultation really never occurs. I suppose it's a difficult thing for it to occur effectively, sometimes.

DePue: When you say consultation, you mean the president reaching out?

Findley: Between the president and the Congress. But here, the War Powers Act requires the report within twenty-four hours, in writing, and Congress doesn't do a damn thing with it. They don't measure up to their responsibility end of the War Powers.

DePue: And, if I might, there's not many things that American presidents, since that time, have agreed on, but, I think, they all have agreed that the constitutionality of the War Powers Act is questionable.

Findley: They all say it is, but, so far, they've all complied, maybe not in every instance, but most of the big ones. For example, when we went into the Gulf War to rescue Kuwait, there was a very good debate over that in both the House…well, certainly in the House. There was a close vote on going in. I remember Tom, the speaker, Tom from Oregon…

DePue: I was thinking Foley, but that's not who you're thinking of.

Findley: He was speaker, and he spoke against it. But, nevertheless, the vote was for, by just a few votes. It was the way the War Powers Act should function, and it did function that time. Now Lincoln…, I shouldn't divert. Go ahead.

DePue: No, go ahead.

Findley: When Lincoln was in the House, he took a very strong position on war powers. He said that our founders made it absolutely clear that one person could not start a war by himself. There had to be a vote of Congress for [an] act of war. He said, "Those who argue against it will say that, well, the president needs flexibility. He can say, 'you don't see the danger, but I do. Canada's apt to attack us,' and we need to get ahead of them.'" And Lincoln said, "If that policy is adopted, construct, if you can, the boundaries of that

type of executive decision-making." There's none, just like today, with the drones. The president takes care of it all by himself, decides who gets killed.

DePue: It's a topic of public discussion right now, because Senator Rand Paul just staged one of the rarest events in American politics, with a filibuster, where there was an all-night discussion about whether or not drones could be used on American citizens.

Findley: Against U.S. citizens, here. And they can be. They shouldn't be, but they can be used anyplace. They're dangerous. When they first got in the news, I said we ought to outlaw them, never touch them.

DePue: And the whole discussion of war powers in the post-World War II era is greatly complicated, because we now live in a nuclear age, and we live in an age of terrorist activities.

Findley: JFK was president in the nuclear age. Now, I remember listening to the Air Force general who was then the SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe], the head of NATO, and had his finger on the nuclear weapons. JFK said that the NATO commander was fully informed on his discretion in using the nuclear weapon to defend the country.

DePue: That would have been during the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Findley: Yes. Well, it would have been close to it, yeah.

DePue: Yeah. We're going to switch gears entirely, but we're going to stay in that timeframe of 1973. So, Richard Nixon is still president. We've got the Vietnam War tailing down, but still very much in the news. The news about Watergate is percolating up, and in October 6, 1973, the Yom Kippur War begins.

Findley: The what?

DePue: Yom Kippur.

Findley: Oh, the Yom Kippur, '73, and the gas lines appeared. Remember that?

DePue: I thought that was in Carter's years, but yeah.

Findley: Seventy-three.

DePue: Yeah, that would have been the oil boycott, the first time.

Findley: Yeah, that's what I meant.

DePue: Yes, you're actually right.

Findley: Cars lined up at every gas station…I remember that vividly.

DePue: Now, I know that a big part of your career, and in terms of foreign diplomacy, is going to deal with the Middle East. But, up to this point, it hasn't been on the radar screen much for you.

Findley: No, no.

DePue: How about in '73? Did it catch your attention in '73?

Findley: I know it did. I'm trying to think of what I was doing in reaction to it. Can you give me a hint?

DePue: No, I can't, because I don't know that you addressed it much in the book.

Findley: Seventy-three, we were still in Vietnam. That was paramount. Although, when the Straits of—

DePue: Hormuz?

Findley: Pardon?

DePue: The Straits of Hormuz?

Findley: Hormuz, no, not Hormuz. That's up in the Persian Gulf.

DePue: Oh yeah, I know which one you're talking about, though.

Findley: The Straits—

DePue: The Sinai Peninsula, right next to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: The straits leading out of that.

Findley: Yeah, that's it. I remember recommending that the parties go to the ICJ [International Court of Justice] and agree in advance to accept the judgment of the court, as to who was in charge. In fact, I remember when Iraq…when Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait. I wrote a letter to my friend, on a private basis. He was the vice chairman of foreign affairs in Iraq, [Dr. Humam] Hamoodi. He'd been ambassador to Washington. I wrote to him and said that, if you have some way to suggest to Saddam Hussein that he could become the Hammurabi of the modern era, if he would agree to submit his claim to the oil wells in dispute with Kuwait and accept, in advance, a decision of the world court [ICJ], that he could emerge with flying colors, no matter how they ruled. I never got a response from even Hamoodi. That was kind of a dangerous thing for me to do, and it would have been extra dangerous for Hamoodi to have recommended it to Saddam Hussein. But, think of how the world might

have changed, had he taken that advice and let the court decide who owned that.

DePue: One of the things that occurred after Yom Kippur…It was a short war, as the wars in the Middle East tended to be, at that time. It looked like it was going very poorly for the Israelis, and Nixon made a decision, unilaterally, I believe, to send a huge amount of equipment there.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: A lot of it was coming from Europe.

Findley: He saved Israel. I'm not sure Israel would have gone down, but it was a touchy time, and Nixon earned good marks with Israel for that act.

DePue: Did you agree with that decision, at the time?

Findley: Probably not, but I don't believe I said anything publicly. I just don't remember.

DePue: Where were your constituents, back in this district, on the whole issue of Israel and the future of the Middle East, at the time?

Findley: Well, my constituency on the Arab side was almost zero. There was a man in Pleasant Hill named Lyle Hayden. He and his wife had talked to me about the imbalance there that he thought was unfortunate. He had been called the "shirt-sleeves ambassador" to Iran, because he helped them with technical steps to improve their land use and food production. *Readers Digest* had an article about him. They called him our "shirt-sleeves ambassador" in Iran, I think, or in the Middle East. He was employed, I think, by the Near East Foundation. I don't know whether it still exists or not. I don't believe he was, at that point, a diplomat for the U.S., but he encouraged me to take a look at both sides. That's about as far as he went. There probably were a few Arabs someplace in the district, but I never heard of them. They never came to me. I wasn't trying to please constituents, when I spoke out.

DePue: There weren't that many Jewish people in the district, either.

Findley: The Jewish community in Springfield was quite organized and politically active, very active. There was something of a Jewish community in Quincy, but it wasn't active. It wasn't organized, that I knew of. All of the pro-Israel activity came from the Jewish community in Springfield.

DePue: And yet, I would guess that, if you just went by population, it would be no more than one or two percent of your district.

Findley: Oh, absolutely. It'd be very small.

DePue: So, how about all those farmers and the old style Republicans that you were dealing with? What was their view on the subject?

Findley: Well, I tried to inform them as to what I was doing and why. I don't think I persuaded many, but I don't think I lost many, either. They liked what I was doing in agriculture, and I guess they trusted me to do what I thought was best in the Middle East.

DePue: So, that wasn't their overriding concerns.

Findley: No.

DePue: We're going to get to talk a lot more about the Middle East here, but I didn't want to leave Richard Nixon in 1973 and '74, without talking about Watergate a little bit more. In the book, you started that whole discussion by talking about Spiro Agnew and how, obviously, you weren't too enamored by Spiro Agnew as a vice-president, it sounds like.

Findley: I was astounded when he was chosen as Nixon's running mate in '68, and, as he behaved, I had less respect for him. I met with John B. Anderson, Ray Humphries—an old time Republican leader that I always got along with well—and Matt Mathias, in a huddle one day. We were all distressed with the prospect that Spiro Agnew would be the next nominee for president. None of us liked the idea. We even talked about the need for a third party, but that was the end of it. We never met again. We probably should have. But, of course, Agnew rather quickly got into deep water dating from his tenure as executive director of the state, I guess you'd call that job.

DePue: He was governor of Maryland.

Findley: Baltimore, when he had been an executive director of Baltimore. I think that was it. It wasn't long before he was under indictment. I don't know whether Steve Jones suggested this or not—I don't think Steve was there—but I made a move on the House floor that would have forced a committee to take up the political problem that his indictment posed to the country. It just struck me as unthinkable that we might have—through the action of Richard Nixon leaving office—have a guy under indictment in the District Court in Baltimore for transgressions and, at the same time, become president of the United States. So, I did take one initiative on the House floor to stop him. I also wrote to Elliott Richardson, who was then the attorney general, urging that he do something about Agnew. I think there was some step he could have taken, but his response was, "The case is not sufficient." In other words, the case against Agnew was not sufficient to justify removal from office. But those were two little steps I took.

DePue: You were never a fan of Spiro Agnew to begin with. Would it fair to say that you were relieved when he got himself in such serious trouble?

Findley: Well, I was relieved in a way, but I saw it as a peril to the good will and the well-being of the government. It's curious. He obviously knew what I was doing.

DePue: Agnew did.

Findley: Agnew did. Yet, when I wrote my book, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby*, he wrote a letter and congratulated me on my book. He said, "I'd like to see that printed in numerous copies. I think there would be a big market for it." He made no reference to my behavior in the past, which surprised me.

DePue: What did you think about Gerald Ford, then, as the new vice-president? Was he the right choice for Nixon?

Findley: Yes. And there was no dispute among Democrats. People were very comfortable with his move up. He wasn't a dazzling figure. I can't remember any initiatives that he made that I applaud, especially, although his decision on Nixon's fate, presidential exoneration or something—what was it?

DePue: Now that you mention it, I'm trying to think of the right word here, his clemency?

Findley: It's more than clemency. He just wiped out the record against him, I think. He also relieved the draft dodgers of prosecution. I thought both steps were excellent, but they were unpopular.

DePue: Excellent, because of what?

Findley: Because going the other way with prosecution would have been almost endless. It would have gone on, maybe, for a couple of years. And during that period, the country would be pretty well paralyzed.

DePue: That would be the focus of attention for everybody, then.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: During the initial reports about Watergate, since it started as a campaign stunt, that was coming out before Nixon is overwhelmingly reelected in 1972.

Findley: That's right. (chuckles)

DePue: But it's 1973, when the case just keeps building and building, and obviously, that extends into '74. During that long time period, where Watergate seems to be in the front pages every single day, what's your emotional reaction to all of that news?

Findley: I thought it was very sad. I didn't like Ehrlichman and Haldeman. I thought they were bad people. Now, Ehrlichman had been one of my constituents. He was a graduate of Principia College in Elsah, Illinois, a Christian Scientist. He's the only Christian Scientist I ever encountered who was really a bad guy, a bad actor, engaged in deceit, cover-up.

I didn't know Haldeman as well as I knew Ehrlichman, but I was disappointed in Nixon's reaction. He should have fired them and gone to the country and said, "This is stupid, and it never should have happened." The country would have forgiven him, and that would have been the end of it.

DePue: But, as you explain very well in your book, for a long, long time, you thought impeachment, which essentially…That's where the House comes and votes whether or not there is enough evidence to have the president tried in the Senate.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: You thought impeachment was too far.

Findley: Because it would be a period of agony for the whole country. And I didn't believe that he had been any worse than some of his predecessors.

DePue: Did you just think that his people had done some very bad things, without his knowledge, and it was just a matter of him trying to cover it up?

Findley: Some of his tapes would make you think otherwise. In my mind, I thought that some of his terrible statements on tape were the reaction of an insecure man, which I think he was. He was trying to please the little gang around him in the office that day and just be one of them.

DePue: When you say, "the statements," are you talking about the substance of the statements or the vulgarity of the statements?

Findley: The vulgarity and the substance. I guess Nixon probably believed that the presidency could get by with a lot and not get caught. I guess he believed that he could survive this, but it wasn't to be.

DePue: I want to read what you and others developed as an attempt to censure, rather than to impeach.

Findley: That was a major undertaking that I led.

DePue: And that's why it's very important for us to get more discussion on this. Here's the censure letter, proposal. What would the right term be? Anyway, "Richard M. Nixon, in his conduct of the office of president, despite great achievements in foreign policy, which are highly beneficial to every citizen, and, indeed, to all people of the world, 1) has shown insensitivity to the moral

demands, lofty purpose and ideals of the high office, which he holds in trust, and 2) has, through gross negligence and maladministration, failed to prevent his close subordinates and agents from committing acts of grave misconduct, obstruction and impairment of justice, abuse and undue concentration of power and contravention of the laws of governing agencies of the executive branch."

Tell me about the decision to do censure and, then, what you were trying to do behind the scenes to get that, rather than impeachment.

Findley: There were a lot of Democrats, as well as Republicans, who thought it was a very sad time in history, and they wanted to see a way out. They didn't want him to go free. They wanted him to feel the sting. I felt that Nixon had unique talent in foreign policy that was serving our country very well.

In fact, to digress for a minute, I think Henry Kissinger said that, at the depth of Watergate, Nixon was still trying to deal with the Middle East, and he gave orders to Henry Kissinger to draft papers that would be the focal means to bring about a settlement of the Arab states with Israel. He wanted to make that a major undertaking, in the immediate future. Did you ever hear of that?

DePue: Well, I just read about it in the book—

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: But not before.

Findley: Well, Kissinger is the source of it. Those papers disappeared, of course. I didn't know about it at the time. I was hoping that Nixon would be more aggressive in the Middle East and get things settled, but I did not know what he had told Kissinger to get going.

DePue: Do you recall? Would this attempt by Nixon to try to do something very specific to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East have happened before or after Yom Kippur?

Findley: Before or after what?

DePue: The Yom Kippur War.

Findley: I just don't know. I think it would be after, but I'm not positive.

But, I believe that censure was a punishment that was very severe. I had watched on television the censure of the Tennessee senator... [searching for a name]

DePue: We can get that into the record later.

Findley: It was a deep, a very dramatic moment, when he had to appear on the floor and confess his guilt before all of his colleagues. If Nixon had had to do that, as he would have done, it would have a wrenching experience for him and all his friends.

DePue: Would that have restricted some of his power, his executive power?

Findley: It would not, not that I know of. But I really believe that—and my belief is reinforced by the discovery of these papers that Henry Kissinger mentioned—that he had great things that he could still do for the country, even though he was censured. But he wouldn't be able to do it if he was impeached.

DePue: The way you discussed this in the book—you mentioned it earlier, I think, today—you thought that censure had a very likely possibility of being successful.

Findley: I did.

DePue: I was a young kid in college at the time. My recollection was that censure was never really taken that seriously.

Findley: We sought permission of the Rules Committee to have censure in order, before the vote on impeachment, and I believe the Rules Committee gave it to us—maybe you know from my records. But there was John McFall. He was one of the senior Democrats. He told me, one day, "This is all very sad." He just thought it was awful that a president of the United States was this close to being ejected. Many people thought Nixon was an awful man and still do. I thought he had some awful shortcomings, but, on balance, he was a great public servant.

DePue: Nixon had always had a thorny relationship with the American press.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: And one of the things that Spiro Agnew did was to take on the press on behalf of Richard Nixon.

Findley: And he did well. (laughs)

DePue: Yeah, with some very colorful phrases.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Do you think that the press treated Nixon fairly, during the Watergate era?

Findley: I believe they did. The press didn't always treat me constructively or positively, but I always felt that, when I had an idea well presented, that I deserved what they drew from it.

DePue: That gets [us] to closure on the Watergate era. Just a quick reflection on—

Findley: Now, getting back to the status of censure, I don't believe the House membership had really contemplated censure as an option. I don't think the public had, either. I came to it pretty late in the game. I probably started too late.

DePue: I got the impression, in the book, that much of that decision, to go for censure, dealt with your own personal experiences and your own gut feeling about who Richard Nixon is.

Findley: Yeah, a man of great talent, great vision.

DePue: Did you think, at his core, he was relatively honorable, as those terms can be applied to people at that high level of politics?

Findley: I can only say that I don't really know any one person that really was close to Nixon. I think he was a furtive guy. He is insecure. Schizophrenia, does that fit? I don't know. When his wife died, and he sent me a hand-written note, I melted. (laughs) Here, this guy, with grief over his wife, with grief over his own behavior, thought it important to tell me that I'd been ahead of my time and that he regretted my departure.

DePue: But, by the time he passed away, the American public had had an opportunity, lots of time, to rethink their relationship with Richard Nixon.

Findley: That's true.

DePue: And he had had something of a renaissance, to a certain degree.

Findley: I think the renaissance did occur, but not very quickly. There were just tons of books, attacking Nixon, that just rolled off the presses for months after his resignation. He was vilified. I think it's hard to find any man in history that's without flaws. He had some giant flaws, but he had some giant talent, too.

DePue: Fair enough. How well did you know the new president, Gerald Ford? He was a member of the House, and you were, as well.

Findley: I remember the day that he was driving a little Chevy convertible, stopped in the middle of the street, First Street and Constitution…No, it wasn't Constitution, a street north of there. He was going to take on Charlie Halleck and be his successor. He stopped me and said he wanted to have a chat with me someday, and I said, fine.

DePue: I take it Halleck was the Republican minority?

Findley: He was, from Indiana. I liked him. He had his own hideaway where he could have a lot of scotch with his lunch. (both laugh) I didn't like that part of him.

But he had been of the old school, cooperating with the southern conservatives on a lot of issues and taking no stands of merit on big issues. But he was always nice to me. In fact, I didn't take sides in that contest at all. But, I remember when a lady in the press—I forget her name, a columnist for the *Washington Post*—came to me and said, "I understand you're Charlie Halleck's campaign manager. How are things going?" I said, "This is the first time I heard of that." (both laugh) I wasn't. He'd never asked me to be chairman of his campaign, but I voted for him.

DePue: As minority leader?

Findley: Yes. Of course, he went down, but he went down with dignity; so did Gerry Ford. Gerry Ford was…Well, he had some kindred background with myself. He wasn't a rich guy. He was adopted, I believe. He had ambition in politics. The only place he was elected, though, was that one Congressional district. He went from there to the vice presidency. He hadn't been a national figure. Even after he was vice president he was not a national figure by most standards. He was a decent man. He was kind of laid back. Not a country bumpkin, I'm not suggesting that. He was not flashy. He wasn't a star. He was a steady hand at the tiller, and I think the American people felt that in him.

DePue: Was he right man at the right time?

Findley: I think so. I think so. Yeah, he was the right man. He probably should have skipped the reelection bid, which he had promised he would never do to his wife. She heard about his decision to the contrary in the press, not from him. (laughs) That was not to his credit.

DePue: One of the initiatives that was being discussed quite a bit from 1972 on—so certainly during the time that Ford was president—was the Equal Rights Amendment. I know Betty Ford was a very strong proponent of that.

Findley: Yes, and he didn't try to keep her quiet. I didn't try to keep Lucille quiet, but she never spoke out. She left public affairs to me, but I was always favorable to the Fords.

DePue: I know it passed in '72, overwhelmingly, in both the House and the Senate, before it ran into a buzz saw in, of all places, here in Illinois.

Findley: I'm fuzzy about that.

DePue: I did want to ask your general assessment of Ford as president.

Former President Gerald Ford presents plaques to Representative Findley and former Senator Hubert Humphrey for their contributions to the fight against world hunger, 1977.

Findley: He did the right things in healing the wounds of Watergate. He did the right thing in freeing Nixon from prosecution, because, if anybody had paid a price for his misdeeds, Nixon did. The publicity was just a torrent. I'm amazed that he really survived. A lesser person would have crawled away and never be heard from. But, he did some excellent work in foreign policy after his retirement. He took trips to the Soviet Union and worked hard on Soviet policy and wrote three or four books after he left office.

DePue: Let's get your impressions of another person. This would have been Speaker, Carl Albert.

Findley: Of all the speakers that I knew, he was the least impressive. He was not strong. He was easily pushed around by people like Wayne Hayes of Ohio, who was a domineering personality. Carl Albert, I don't think, was influential among Democrats, actually. I forget just why it was that he became speaker, but he was not a good one.

Tip O'Neill, for example, did a good job, I thought. Tom, a guy from Oregon, he was chairman of the Ag Committee at one time, Tom Foley, he was outstanding. Jim Wright, I thought, did a good job. Now, Jim got tangled up in some government subsidy of a book that he was trying to market. I guess that's why he left office.

DePue: Wright was the speaker after your time, then, in the House, right?

Findley: Let's see. He got into the book trouble after I was out, but he was speaker while I was in.

DePue: I'm looking at a listing of the former speakers.

Findley: I hope I'm right. Maybe I'm wrong.

DePue: Carl Albert, from '71 through '77, and then, January of '77, Tip O'Neill takes over. He's speaker all the way through most of the Reagan years.

Findley: Then who followed Tip O'Neill?

DePue: It must have been Wright.

Findley: Hmm?

DePue: I don't have that page printed out, but it had to be Wright.

Findley: Jim was in there. He wasn't there for very long, two years, I guess.

DePue: What I think I'd like to do to finish up with you today, Congressman, is to talk about the election of '76 and your thoughts. I know you spelled this out quite

a bit in the book, as well, but I'm intrigued by Ford's decision to replace Rockefeller as his vice-president, with John Connelly.

Findley: I don't know why he did it. I think he would have been better off to stick with Rocky. I just don't know what happened inside there. I liked Rockefeller. He was my choice for president for several years. I campaigned with him in Illinois on an occasion or two. Ha, isn't that strange? But John Connelly, he's a character. (chuckles) I think he had an almost tragic finale. Didn't he go broke and have a public sale of household goods?

DePue: I don't recall that. You're probably right. I just don't recall. Isn't he also the one who was sitting in the convertible with JFK?

Findley: That's right, yeah. John Connelly probably could have been a good president. I don't doubt that, but I urged Ford not to choose Connelly as his running mate. I thought it was in a private letter, but it didn't stay private. Evans Novak made a big play on the letter, and that got John Connelly furious. He really took out after me, with the help of others. He reminded me of LBJ in many ways. He had been a Democrat, for example, shifted. But, he had been a wheeler dealer, and he had some connections with lobbyists, milk lobbyists, I think. I just thought Gerry Ford ought to get a candidate that had no stains at all.

But, another interesting footnote, I talked to Connelly several years later about the Middle East, I believe. He told me he was really pleased with what I was trying to do in the Middle East. Now, here's a guy that I really had a hand in shooting down (chuckles) as a presidential candidate, yet he took the trouble to tell me that.

DePue: I suspect—and this is pure speculation—but, I suspect part of Ford's calculation is, Nelson Rockefeller is not going to be able to deliver New York, but Connelly might be able to deliver Texas, to the Electoral College.

Findley: That could be true. That may have been what governed the decision, but I'm not sure of it. I think Rockefeller still had good standing in New York. After all, he had been governor there a long time. He was noted as the Republican who could bring a lot of dissident elements together, including the blacks.

DePue: But I also recall that the '76 convention, that was contested right down to the wire, with Ronald Reagan at the time, and there'd be another reason to look for Connelly, who has better conservative credentials than Nelson Rockefeller did.

Findley: Yeah, Rockefeller didn't have conservative credentials, but that didn't bother me. I thought the party ought to be at least a centrist party, not conservative.

DePue: That might be the perfect opportunity, then, for me to ask this question. What happened to Paul Findley? What happened to the Paul Findley who ran for

Congress in the early ‘60s, who was pretty much conservative down the line and, now, the Congressman Paul Findley we got in 1976?

Findley: Well, I think I learned something. Believe me, when I ran against Pete Mack, I was conservative. See, after defeating the car dealer in Quincy, I immediately was moved into a new district, sharing it with Pete Mack of Carlinville, a terrific, popular guy, likeable, no enemies. But I stuck to my conservative guns all through that campaign. He ran a big ad several times, listing the things I’d voted against, and he was right, every point. (chuckles)

But, at that time this was sort of a crossroads moment for the country and for rural America. I didn’t speak up for conservative principals just to get elected. I really believed them as a candidate in ‘60. I believed in limited government, that the federal government ought to stay out of education, welfare and things like that.

When I got into office—and despite my votes—the country’s direction changed. I thought the only sensible thing for me to do was to adjust to reality and, where I could, redirect the new direction, but not to try to kill it. To try to stop all those programs would have been futile. [It] might have been popular with a lot of voters, but I didn’t have people complaining as I changed. I had this personal organization that I met with regularly—more during campaigns than otherwise—but I would have big gatherings and open to questions, and I didn’t have trouble satisfying the troops. I changed where I thought I ought to change.

DePue: In other words, the district was changing with you?

Findley: Well, a little bit, quite a little, I’m sure. My initial district had a population that was a way below the average of Congressional districts. When I was with Pete Mack, it suddenly got much bigger, but I stayed with conservative principals in that campaign. It was only after the ‘62 election that I began to move a bit toward the center, as I saw it.

DePue: I think this is probably a logical place for us to finish today, which leaves the huge and important topic of Middle East diplomacy for our next session.

Findley: Okay.

DePue: It might be our last session, but maybe we’ve got a couple more to do. So, thank you very much, Congressman.

Findley: Now sometime in the next fifty years this will be transcribed, right?

DePue: Well, with your help and a lot of volunteers, yes, we’ll get it done.

Interview with Paul Findley

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Interview # 6: March 18, 2013

Interviewer: Mark DePue

DePue: Today is Monday, March 18, 2013. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the Director of Oral History with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today, I have one more session—maybe the last—with Congressman Paul Findley. Good morning, congressman.

Findley: Good morning.

DePue: I think this is our sixth session. I could be wrong on that, but we've had quite a conversation, and it's all been building up to this conversation today. The thing that you're best known for is your dealings with the Palestinians, with Middle East situations, after you were successful in getting involved with foreign affairs once you became a congressman. Obviously, we have to talk about your eventual reelection defeat in 1982.

So, we have talked a little bit about what was going on in the Middle East and your involvement in it in the '50s, and '60s, and early '70s. I think we even talked a little bit about the Yom Kippur War. But, as I recall, last time we spoke you mentioned that, during that time, you really weren't paying that close attention to it. Would that be—

Findley: Seventy-three.

DePue: Seventy-three.

Findley: Well, in a sense, my other legislative activities were sort of coming together successfully. Famine prevention was a major one. I believe that came to a

head in 75. I worked closely with Hubert Humphrey in the Senate, who was, in my book, a towering figure as a politician, one of the great people of my acquaintance, who became a close associate purely by circumstance. We were drawn together because we both had the belief that the land grant college community could do great things for foreign food-deficit countries.

The whole thing started when a professor named Hadley Read of the University of Illinois—who had been a member of a consortium that worked in India for a number of years—brought the galley proofs to a book that he had written on the subject to me. He thought I'd like to read it, which I did. I ultimately gave away, probably, a dozen copies of his book. It was *Partners with India*, and it told of the success of six U.S. land grant colleges, working together as a team in India to create, I think, three entirely new teaching institutions, directed towards rural India, but mainly towards small scale farmers.

And it just hit me, after I read the galley, that here's the answer for the food-deficit countries. I doubted that any of them had an educational system—some sort of adult education, extension type, service—reaching farmers. I knew, from brief travels I had made to South America, that they didn't even have a postal system. Radio was about the only way of communicating they had, and it probably didn't help them very much.

DePue: This was India or South America you're talking about?

Findley: South America. It could apply to Indonesia and any of several other countries, but I had traveled in South America, so their opportunities seemed pretty fresh. I talked to Hubert Humphrey about it. He had had the same idea, but hadn't done much on it.

So, I made my office the headquarters for writing the legislation that eventually became known as Title 12, the Famine Prevention Act. Dan Parker—of fountain pen fame—was head of AID [Agency for International Development]. Earl Butz was secretary of agriculture. Butz said, "Well, this is really a foreign policy endeavor. It ought to be based in the State Department, not in the USDA." I'm not sure he was right, but that was the position he took, and it was a generous one. Dan Parker, who was keenly interested, he was from Iowa and was close to farming because of that. During the summer, I think it was '60…I think I read Parker's galley proofs in '66, and it took eight years to get the bill through.

Findley: Well, during that time, in fits and starts, it was written in my office. Dick McCall was a professional for Hubert. He attended all of our sessions and took a direct part in the construction and kept Hubert informed. Hubert never attended one of these, but I persuaded another professor at the U of I, named Harold Guither, G-u-i-t-h-e-r, who was known, nationally, as an expert on farm policy and its impact on the nation. He had the summer off, and I think

he took three months. He was on my payroll for about three months, or maybe less, one summer. He helped a lot on this.

The product went through, without an amendment, in committee. I remember a couple of Democrats wondered if we couldn't move some of the body of the bill into the committee report and shorten the bill. I argued against it, successfully. It just swept through on a voice vote. When it went to the House floor, it received a very comfortable margin. I forget just what it was, but it was the strongest support for any foreign assistance-type legislation ever voted in the history of the House.

DePue: This is the Title 12 Famine Prevention Act.

Findley: Yes, yes.

DePue: What specifically did it do?

Findley: It authorized land grant universities and some other universities to engage in long-term contracts to deal with the improvement of food production in specific countries. It gave them authority. Of course, it was still subject to the appropriations process, but it was a very big step up for them. Hubert and I both presented it as using the genius that had already been demonstrated in the land grant approach to educating U.S. farmers. Using that genius for the foreign countries seemed logical to us. It was illustrated in this book by Hadley Read, called *Partners with India*, so we could see partners with other countries developing to the benefit of everyone.

U.S. farmers were so enthusiastic about what extension education had done for their community that they were really happy with this foreign aid-type bill. (chuckles) It was almost unbelievable. Anyhow, we got that enormous vote of confidence. Before Hubert died, but not much before—once it was signed into law by Nixon—Hubert and I decided to have what we called a famine prevention symposium in the U.S. Senate chamber…not the chamber, but one of the big committee rooms.

He [Humphrey] pulled himself out of his sick bed to speak at this symposium. It was a tremendous crowd. For some reason, the diplomatic community turned out in mass. I think seventy embassies were represented in the response. It was a high point of enthusiasm for legislation. Hubert was really on his deathbed, but he got out of the bed, and came to the symposium and spoke. He was very feeble at the start, and then he gains steam, and he was the same old Hubert by the time he

Congressman Findley meets with Vice President Gerald Ford.

finished speaking.

Gerald Ford was then vice president of the United States, during that brief period, the vice presidency. Hubert's speech was the keynote, but Gerry Ford was very supportive. I don't think I added much to it, but I was there and took part. It was a heady experience, and it made me feel that we really hit gold, that something good had happened.

DePue: Well, I want to ask you, the name that is normally identified with saving a billion-plus people in the world is Norman Borlaug and the development of these miracle grains, but he's very much a product of these land grant colleges.

Findley: I believe that's true. That's also known as the Green Revolution. India benefited from the Green Revolution, but they had a good experience that has lasted, and they haven't really had a food crisis of any scale since then. Now, I'm not saying it's a result of this bill, but creating these universities did help.

DePue: And they've had an explosion in their population growth.

Findley: Oh yes, yes, that's right.

DePue: Well, that was a chapter I wasn't aware of at all. I'm glad you went down that road for us. It had a huge impact, if you look at world affairs.

Findley: After I got out of Congress, I had the good fortune to be appointed to BIFAD, which is a board created in this bill. I served on it for two terms, most of eight years, I believe. But, I never could get the board focused on the real intent that Hubert and I had. They liked collaborative research, test tubes and all that, clean work. They didn't have to get their hands dirty. So, I was very disappointed with how they've carried it out. I had a chance this past week to speak to the latest BIFAD. BIFAD has met about 150 times since the bill came through, but it still hasn't gotten a grip around the real purpose and the real promise of the bill.

DePue: Do you know what that acronym stands for?

Findley: Board for International Food and Agricultural Development. Now, there's a plaque hanging up there on the wall that Gerry Ford provided to both Hubert and myself and also a photograph of me with Hubert and Gerry Ford. It dates that event, I believe. Anyhow, I gave my pep talk this past weekend, trying to get them back on the right road. Probably won't do any good, but I tried.

DePue: Well, that explains why this is fresh on your mind, then.

Findley: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: Well, let's turn our attention, then, if you're willing, to the Middle East.

Findley: By the way, that experience of eight years, from start to finish on the legislation, shows the importance, once in a while, of seniority. If I hadn't been able to hang in there all those years, it probably would have died, because Hubert is dead.

DePue: Did Humphrey return to the Senate after Johnson bowed out?

Findley: Yes, he did.

DePue: You just mentioned the importance of seniority. For most of that time—especially through the '60s, I would think—it's controlled by the Democrats, and it's controlled, basically, by longstanding, long-sitting conservative Democrats from the south, most of those committees. Were they not?

Findley: It's still true, to a great extent, in the Senate. The House has changed committee structure. I was in the House twenty-two years. I was never in the majority.

DePue: Would you have liked to have been in the majority?

Findley: Yes, but I had fun in the minority and got a few things done.

DePue: Being in the minority, were there any advantages of that at all?

Findley: Probably. (pause) I don't think so, no. I'd like to have been in the majority. I could have made faster progress, I'm sure.

DePue: Now can we turn to the Middle East?

Findley: Sure.

DePue: Okay. I wanted to mention here, we talked briefly about '73, but I was reminded, in doing some research, September of 1972, there was an event that captured the public's attention. That was during the Munich Olympics, when the PLO staged an attack on Israeli athletes and killed several of their athletes. I don't know if there's any connection with that and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, but in '67, the Israelis did a preemptive launch. In '73, it was quite the opposite. I believe the Egyptians launched that.

Findley: Seventy-three, Richard Nixon was president. Many people would say that Nixon saved Israel, and I think that's probably true, because at a moment of crisis, he really unloaded everything we had in Europe for the use of the state of Israel. All of the battles were fought on territory occupied by Israel. So, in a sense, it wasn't the Arabs trying to take over Israel. But, nevertheless, Israel's fate was in the balance, quite seriously. I think they gave some thought to using nuclear weapons.

DePue: They, the Israelis?

Findley: The Israelis. But the majority overruled that.

DePue: Do you think it was a good thing that Nixon stepped in, in the way he did?

Findley: He saved Israel. I've never tried to eliminate Israel. I've never been opposed to Israel. I just don't think they ought to take over Arab land without proper due process. The Yom Kippur War was a reaction to the '67 War. They were trying to regain territory they lost.

DePue: What I have read is, part of what they were trying to regain, also, was some measure of self-respect, since they were so seriously defeated in '67.

Findley: That's true. That's true. The Arabs were that way. Yet, they didn't have much unity that I could detect. Jordan, Egypt, Syria, they didn't work together as a team. But anyhow, Nixon saved them, and he got a lot of credit from the Jews in that subsequent election. Rabin was then, I believe, ambassador, maybe foreign minister, and he was publicly for Nixon's reelection.

I was unaware of the *Liberty* crisis until years later. I knew that the Israelis had sunk a U.S. vessel, not a big one, but it was a U.S. Navy vessel. I had no idea of the facts about it until I read a book several years later, written by a man named James Ennes, E-n-n-e-s, who was deck officer when the assault by the Israeli forces occurred. He finally, in retirement, wrote a book, and it was an eye-opener. I could hardly believe it. I read it on a flight across the Atlantic, and I just couldn't believe that that had actually happened.

DePue: This particular incident, though, occurred in the 1967 period.

Findley: That's right, so the book was written in the '70s, sometime. That's when I read it. I became personally acquainted with Ennes. I attended a number of the reunions of survivors. I thought the facts that Ennes established were just disgraceful for our president.

DePue: This would have been President Johnson.

Findley: LBJ, yeah. The *Liberty* came awfully close to going down. The best theory I have heard, about why the Israelis, at that stage, took the immense risk they did by assaulting the ship, was they weren't trying to win the war. They'd really won the war by then. There was just kind of a mop-up left. But they figured that, if they could pin the sinking of the *Liberty* on Egypt, for example, that would just outrage the American people. They would go to war. They'd ally themselves with the Israeli cause from then on, and that would secure Israel's future. That was one theory advanced, and maybe it was the real thing. But, it was a deliberate act. There is no doubt in my mind that it was deliberate, on the part of the Israelis. They knew exactly what ship it was. It was U.S. Navy. They had flown flights around the ship, during the bright day in the morning, and they knew what they were attacking when it occurred, in the afternoon. The American flag was flying briskly all day long. They shot

down one flag. They put up a bigger flag. And it was a bad day for the sailors on the ship: thirty-four killed, I believe, over one hundred wounded, very badly wounded.

It wasn't just an aerial attack. They used torpedo ships to try to blast holes big enough to sink it. One of the holes was over forty feet wide and just inches above the water line, so another well-placed torpedo would have sent the whole ship down. Early in their assault, they destroyed every antenna they could find on the ship. They had no way to get messages out. But one of the seamen clobbered together a little, makeshift antenna, and they got one SOS out.

Well, the U.S. Navy flotilla nearby got the SOS. So did the White House. So did Israel. Israel knew that the jig was up, so to speak, so they claimed they had had a case of mistaken identity, and the assault ended shortly after that.

Before it ended, the captain of an aircraft carrier sent aloft some fighter planes to go to the defense of the *Liberty*, but LBJ ordered them to turn back. I'm not sure what motivation he had. Maybe he said, well, we're going to get this settled without going to war, so I don't want to issue any provocations that might, possibly, lead to a war with Israel, an embarrassment to Israel. He was trying to avoid that. But it was a bad day for all concerned, as you probably discovered from reading my report.

DePue: The motivation of Lyndon Johnson is important in that scenario, and you already said you don't know why. Just the timeline, itself, suggests that it wasn't a reaction to a Jewish lobby. Or was it a political calculation—do you think—that he didn't want to upset the Jewish voting bloc, which had always voted Democratic?

Findley: Well, that might have figured in this, because things were going bad in Vietnam at the same time, and he counted on every sector of opinion he could get, including the Jewish sector. They were beginning to be critical of our role in Vietnam, so that may have been the background.

He ordered a cover-up that still remains in force. The surviving kids… You read this all in the book; I won't repeat it. He probably thought the cover-up would save a lot of explanation on his part. I imagine that was the controlling factor, the idea of a Commander in Chief calling back rescue fighters from a beleaguered ship, still under attack.

DePue: Well, this is at the same time period he was dealing with riots in American cities, and growing tension on race relations.

Findley: That's right, yeah.

DePue: Riots in cities like Detroit and Washington D.C. and Watts and places like that. The war was going on.

Findley: It was a bad day for LBJ.

DePue: He didn't need that one more problem, perhaps. (both chuckle)

Findley: That's true.

DePue: Shortly after that—I think it was 1974—you made a trip to the Middle East. Was that your first trip to the Middle East?

Findley: No.

DePue: Tell us about why you went there.

Findley: It was my second trip overseas, except for wartime service. I had no knowledge of the Middle East at all. I knew Israel was there, Egypt was there, Syria. That's about the extent. I just didn't know anything about that region. I was fairly well informed about Europe.

DePue: I would assume, when you went there in 1974 and everything up to this point in time, being a veteran of World War II, you knew the painful reality of the Holocaust.

Findley: That's true.

DePue: And knew the basic understanding—

Findley: I had been defensive of Israel until that point. I had spoken up in criticism of Arab forces that might drive the Jews into the sea.

DePue: Well, before that time…I think I'm not mischaracterizing this…obviously, the Arab world was the sworn enemy of Israel.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: And they were sworn to not just take the land back but to destroy Israel.

Findley: That's true. That is true. They felt they had been abused by the U.S., in particular. Roosevelt had promised King Saud that the U.S. would not approve of any Jewish settlement in the Middle East without consulting with Arab leaders. Well, Harry Truman ignored that. He didn't consult with anybody. He consulted with his former haberdashery partner, who was Jewish, and instantly recognized the State of Israel.

In an earlier book, I think I spent quite a bit of space about—I believe his name was Goldman—a leading Zionist, who was upset because the Zionists did not consult with Arab leaders before they moved in. I always felt sorry that he didn't have a stronger position in the movement. He might have spared a lot of lives.

DePue: As I recall my history from this time period—it's a little bit sketchy—but after the war, Great Britain was an occupying force in Palestine, and they were trying to prevent the Jews, who were—on an individual basis—looking for some kind of a homeland, some kind of solution, to avoid yet another holocaust or more persecution in Europe. So, they gravitated to Palestine, despite the best efforts of Great Britain to prevent that from happening.

Findley: And for a time, the U.S. resisted the entry of large numbers of Jews into America.

DePue: During the war, itself.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: During the lead up to the war.

Findley: Yes, that's right. So, they had every reason to feel neglected.

DePue: Well, we kind of got off. I led you off track. Let's get to 1974 and that first trip.

Findley: My occupation, before election, was managing a weekly newspaper in Pike County. One of my news reporters was named Franklin—I forget her first name right now—but her son was a teacher in an American school in Kuwait. He was on a holiday in Ethiopia. He loved the Arab world. Later, when I interviewed him, he said being locked up by the Arabs really didn't change his mind. He liked Arabs. He liked to live among them, later on, after he got out of prison.

He was a school teacher, and the plane he was trying to return to Kuwait on had engine trouble and had to make an unscheduled landing in Aden, which was, then, the capital of South Yemen. He was a camera buff, and while he was waiting for the plane to be repaired, he took pictures of the harbor area and the airport. The Yemenis had just thrown the British out, in the wake of the '67 War, so they were suspicious of anybody that looked like a Britisher. He was blonde-haired, and they were sure he was a Britisher, a spy with his camera. They gave him a noontime trial and sentenced him to five years solitary confinement as a spy.

Well, his mother was writing these news notes for my paper, still doing that. I got a partner, who was running the paper. The mother kept urging me to do what I could. We had no diplomatic mission in Aden. The British did, but we did not. It soon became apparent that the guy would probably die in prison, if I didn't go try to get him out. So, I decided to try. We had no mission at all in South Yemen. I had to go alone. I got an allowance for my trip from the State Department.

DePue: They authorized you, then? They approved the trip?

Findley: They did. In fact, I took a letter, signed by Kissinger, who was then Secretary of State. It was addressed to me, not to the Aden officials, but it was about my trip, and he expressed the hope that better relations could be established. I let them know that I'd be bringing a letter from Kissinger, and I think that helped pave the way to make for a cordial reception, which I received. I had, I think, five days there, altogether, before I finally had word that I could take him home with me, but I did finally get that.

That was a storybook ending for the trip. I didn't go straight back to the district, but he really had a joyous welcome at the St. Louis airport, when he got there, with his family.

DePue: Had you done a decent amount of homework before you went into that situation?

Findley: Well, I didn't. Every day was so busy, I probably didn't spend much time on it. But before I left for Aden, without advanced notice a man named John Duke Anthony came to see me. He was then a graduate of Johns Hopkins School of Foreign Affairs, and he had been to Aden. He was one of the very few U.S. citizens that had been there for years. I believe that Bob McNamara, at some point, went there as an official of the World Bank, not as a U.S. official. It was a very secluded, isolated government that was under the domination of the Soviet Union. It was a sort of adjunct to the Soviets at that time.

But, John Duke Anthony came to tell me his experience when he'd been there recently. It wasn't a very attractive reception he got, but it was accurate, I'm sure. It made me feel better, because he got out. I wasn't sure I'd get out. I reasoned that Aden probably didn't want to make a martyr out of me, so I didn't think I'd be in big trouble if I went. I didn't expect to get Ed Franklin out. That was his name.

DePue: What was your impression of the Arab world and the Arab people?

Findley: It was much more positive than I expected. Now, with all the drawbacks of the Soviet system, the government of South Yemen established women's rights far beyond anything I expected. They were in the government in senior positions. They were trying to establish universal education, I believe.

South Yemen was a very desolate place, almost no rainfall at all, a few minerals, I think. BP [British Petroleum] had a plant that extracted some oil, but that was the extent of it. They had no resources, except a beautiful beach which nobody enjoyed. The population was very small, but they were very pleasant people. I went to a soccer game between South Yemen and Iraq. South Yemen won, and boy, did that stadium full of people explode with joy. It was like being back home. I saw so many common threads between the

people I met there. They seemed like ordinary people that were having a tough time, but they were very kind.

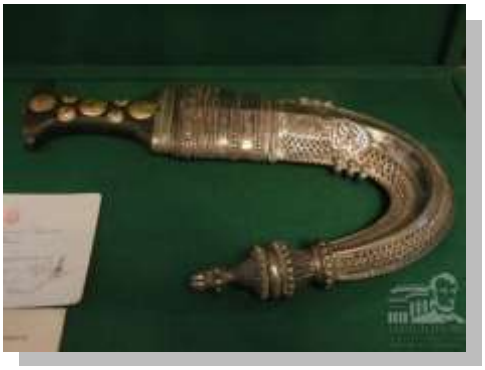
DePue: Well, I know there's a significant postscript to this trip, and it deals with President Ali.

Findley: Yes. Yes, he was executed. They had a coup, overnight coup. I knew, before I went. I knew, from what John Duke Anthony told me, that they had a strange type of presidency. They had three people at the top. The chairman of the presidents was Ali; He was the moderate of the three. But, from what I learned from Anthony, the radical Soviet-type people were very prominent. They had tried to get the upper hand, and they hadn't quite made it. So, I was apprehensive about that.

Ali was just a fine gentleman. He invited me back two or three times. I went back twice. When he went to the UN, he invited me to come. He wanted to be photographed with me, for use back home, and so I went. I talked to Cy Vance [Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, Jr.] during that trip about South Yemen.

Then, I finally got a brief hearing with Jimmy Carter. What he did was to make time for me to be with him alone in a little side room, off the cabinet room one day. I told him that I just felt it unfortunate that our government had not established some kind of diplomatic ties with South Yemen, that they obviously wanted some good will with us. He said, "I'll take care of it." That's the way he put it, and he did. He didn't do it instantly. I guess it was over a year after that that he finally authorized a diplomatic mission to go to South Yemen.

On the way, they stopped at Sana'a, the capital of North Yemen, which has since been united with South Yemen. There they learned that there had been a coup the night before, that Ali, that I met and had become well acquainted with, and Motie, M-o-t-i-e, the foreign minister, had both been executed by a firing squad.



Antique jambiya (Arabic dagger) presented to Congressman Findley in Aden, Yemen by Salim Rubai Ali, Chairman of the Presidential Council, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, 1974.

By the way, that lobster shell was a gift from Motie on my first visit. He took it off his office wall to give to me. The dagger above was a gift from Ali to me that first visit, in that green lined box. So, it showed the courtesy they had extended to me.

DePue: What year roughly was this coup then?

Findley: Seventy-eight, I believe. Jimmy Carter was still in office. Would that be right?

DePue: When you made the initial trip, Gerald Ford was president at the time, I would think.

Findley: That's right. Well, was Gerry Ford president? I guess he was. No, he wasn't.

DePue: Nixon stepped down in '74.

Findley: No, it was Richard Nixon.

DePue: Okay.

Findley: Nixon. Ford had come and gone.

DePue: Now, this is a tough question, but did you feel some responsibility for what happened to Ali?

Findley: Absolutely. I've had that on my conscious ever since, and that was reinforced about five years go. I was in Sharjah, one of the Emirates, at a reception attended by diplomats from the Emirates and nearby and a lot of clerics, Muslim leaders, whatever you call them. After the program, where I spoke, a man came to me, very agitated. He said, "You killed Ali," just like that. He said, "I was handling paperwork for the foreign ministry at the time. I had something to do with the documents that enabled you to get your constituent out of prison. And I know that Ali was a good man." He made that point. "And you killed him." So, that reinforced my bit of conscience over that.

But I went there for the sole purpose of getting Ed Franklin out of prison. I knew he wasn't a spy, and I didn't think I had to apologize for trying to get him out. But he was very agitated, and I didn't calm him down a bit. He was agitated when he left.

Congressman Findley rides a camel during a visit to Egypt in 1972.

DePue: I can see where something like that would stay with you.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Okay, '74 to '78: How much involvement did you have with Middle Eastern affairs?

Findley: Well, it wasn't total, because famine prevention moved along. I was quite active in policy regarding trade with North Vietnam. When did I go to China? In '75, I believe. I visited Egypt, Romania in '72, and I also headed a mission to the Soviet Union that same year.

DePue: In 1972.

Findley: Yeah. Then, I had this ag [agricultural] mission to China. In 1978. But I was busy. I had too many things on my mind.

DePue: About this trip to Aden in '74: Over the next few years, did you begin to seriously rethink your views?

Findley: Yes, I did. And I began to discuss it publicly. I tried to get the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee to at least invite the Yemeni ambassador to New York to come and testify, and he finally did.

DePue: To the United Nations?

Findley: No. He was the permanent ambassador to the UN, but he came down at my request and probably had to get permission from the state to testify informally—now, it wasn't a formal hearing—to the members of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee.

DePue: Were your views about Israel evolving during this time?

Findley: Steven Solarz was a prominent Democrat, always upholding the decision of the State of Israel. He called me "the ambassador from South Yemen" frequently, in a friendly way. I didn't not see the other side of the dispute. I heard only the Israeli side, before my trip—I think I'm correct on that—but I spoke out plainly about the need to have diplomatic relations. Whether we agreed with the other party or not, we ought to communicate with them.

DePue: Was South Yemen about the only Arab country, at the time, we didn't have relations with? Obviously, we didn't have relations with the PLO.

Findley: Yes, yes.

DePue: Syria was certainly a satellite country of the Soviet Union, at the time.

Findley: Yeah, yeah, but I think we had a mission in Syria. In fact, I was received when I had my side trip to Damascus. I spent the night at the U.S. ambassador's residence. Who was that? He's dead now. They're all dead now. (laughs)

I didn't see myself as pro PLO, although I was characterized that way. I took the position that our government was stupid not to have communication with a major political force in the Middle East, namely, the PLO and for us to accept the rule imposed on us by Israel, of not dealing directly with any PLO official. I thought that was shortsighted, and it was not healthy for us, as a nation, or healthy for Israel, really. So, I was the only one speaking up in that way.

DePue: Again, I might mischaracterize this, but, as I recall, the reason that the United States had not recognized the PLO—the reason that Israel was so adamant against it—was that the PLO refused to accept the right of Israel even to exist.

Findley: They did at an early stage, but I know by ‘78, they did not. They had accepted pre—

DePue: As a public statement?

Findley: I think the Palestine National Council had approved it.

DePue: We are going to pause briefly.

Congressman, we took a short break, but I think we were talking about whether or not the PLO, at that time, had recognized Israel.

Findley: To me, that’s a very important point. Churchill once said, I believe, that it’s better to jaw a jaw than to war a war. On another occasion, he said, “When we extended diplomatic relations with China”—which they did long before us—“it was not to confer a compliment, but to secure a convenience.” I always supported that idea, that diplomatic relations weren’t to confer a compliment. They were a convenience to both parties, especially the one that had been holding back. So, I felt that our policy—no matter what the PLO said about Israel… In fact, the more belligerent they were about Israel, the more important that we communicate directly with the PLO and try to influence them. So, I proceeded on that ground.

But in November ‘78, I sat with Yasser Arafat for a long time. Toward the end of the conversation, I told him that I’d like to put down on paper, so I’ll have a clear, correct understanding of what you’ve agreed to. And, in that paper—which he approved, but declined to sign—was the offer by Arafat to establish peace, avoid controversy with Israel, if an independent Palestine were established on the West Bank and Gaza, with a connecting corridor. He said, “In that circumstance, we would avoid all violence in an effort to expand the State of Palestine.” He said, “I’m speaking here as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.” But he said, “The executive committee of the PLO has not actually approved that language, so I would rather wait to publicly identify the PLO position until they do.” And they did act, subsequent to that, very soon. They repeated it several times over subsequent years.

DePue: I’m going to read the statement in, because this is—

Findley: Oh there, you’ve got it.

DePue: This is very important, I think. This is the piece of paper that Arafat handed to you.

Findley: I wrote it. He dictated it. Then I read it back and…

DePue: He approved it, okay.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: "The PLO will accept a Palestinian State, consisting of the West Bank and Gaza, with connecting corridor and, in that circumstance, will renounce any and all violent means to enlarge the territory of that State. I would reserve the right, of course, to use nonviolent—that is, diplomatic and Democratic means—to bring about the eventual unification of all Palestine. We will give de facto recognition to the State of Israel. We will live at peace with all of our neighbors." Dated November 30, 1978.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: I've got more questions on this, but we raced to this point. I want to find out how it was that you, a congressman from the state of Illinois, end up going to visit with Arafat in the first place, because I think that's important.

Findley: And negotiating with him. (chuckles)

DePue: And negotiating. What happened at the State Department?

Findley: I think I violated…What's the law that dates way back to early history? When I went to Paris, headed that Paris mission, some reporter asked Everett Dirksen if I had violated a law that prohibited a private citizen from negotiating with a foreign state—a foreign state, not entity—but a state.

DePue: What year was this?

Findley: This was '65, I believe.

DePue: Okay.

Findley: (chuckling) So, I knew that I was acting without authority, but I had no expectation of being able to influence public policy. I was simply conveying decisions, or thinking, of public leaders that might be of interest to my government. I saw myself as a bridge of information, back and forth. For a little while, I think I occupied that role, and it pleased me to do it.

DePue: Are we talking about the mid-'70s, now or '78?

Findley: It'd be more after '78, and that was getting close to the end of my career. All this came to a head in the last years of my career, to my regret. Although, as I look back on it, I'm glad I got defeated. (both chuckle)

DePue: Well, just to kind of go through some of the timeline here: 1975, a civil war begins in Lebanon, which is going to galvanize Israel's attention.

Findley: Sure.

DePue: Nineteen seventy-four—just shortly before that—Yasser Arafat was allowed to address the United Nations and called for the creation of a Palestinian State.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: So, it was out there in the discussion, at least. But I'm curious about whether you approached the State Department, or the State Department approached you, about meeting with Arafat. How did that come about?

Findley: The State Department had nothing to do with my first meeting. That was in January of '78. I was with a delegation in Damascus. I just excused myself, and a couple of other members did too, to go meet Arafat. Well, we didn't get down to the nub of issues. We just talked in generalities. But he sent word that he would like to meet me again, later that year, in November. So, I was then in Spain, and I took a side trip to meet with him.

DePue: In January of '78, was this strictly on your own initiative? Had you talked to the State Department about doing this?

Findley: The State Department naturally cooperated in the Congressional trip in the Middle East, including a visit to Damascus. I possibly told one of their Congressional guys that I was hoping to meet Arafat over there, but it was a long shot. No date had been firmed up.

There was a French woman—I wish I could remember her name—that I dealt with in the U.S., who claimed to be a confidant of Arafat. She said, "I can work out a date for you to meet Arafat." Well, that pleased me greatly, and I told her to go ahead and do what she could. By the time we got to Damascus, a date had been firmed up.

DePue: What was your motivation for wanting to meet him?

Findley: Now, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee was aware of my date, and probably upset, but he didn't show it.

DePue: He didn't.

Findley: I guess that was Zablocki. I think it was Zablocki.

DePue: Zablocki?

Findley: Now, was I on dangerous ground? I didn't think so, although I knew that there were limitations on what an individual should do with foreign government officials. But Arafat was not a foreign government official.

DePue: Was there anybody from the State Department, or any other American, who was meeting with Arafat?

Findley: Oh, yeah. There were two members, and I promised both of them I'd never tell anybody. But, I think they're dead now, so I might as well tell you. Keith Sebelius of Kansas—who happens to be the cousin of the Democrat who was governor of Kansas. A woman, and now the secretary of HEW or HW—

DePue: Of Health and Human Services?

Findley: Yeah, Sebelius.

DePue: Kathleen Sebelius.

Findley: That's her name, yeah. Well, this is her cousin. He was not of my thinking, but he was of curiosity. Just out of a desire to meet a controversial figure, he joined the group. The other was Helen Minor, whose husband had been governor of New Jersey or Connecticut. He was with the group, yeah. Helen, like Keith, wanted her name not to be mentioned. She, I think, had a broader interest in knowing Arafat than Keith did. He was just there because he was notorious. So, they were with me, and they knew what they were doing. They spent a long evening of discussion with Arafat. They asked very few questions. They didn't take much of a part, but they were there. They could have.

DePue: What was it, when you first went there, that you were wanting to accomplish?

Findley: Get acquainted. I wanted him to understand more about what my thinking was, what the thinking of some others in Congress was. I wanted him to have some direct knowledge of how our government worked. He had never been in the U.S. before. He was not a dummy, but he probably didn't know too much about how we worked.

DePue: Okay, I guess I'm belaboring this point, but my curiosity is…You're a congressman from the minority party. Why are you taking on this responsibility, when the official position of the United States government is that we have no relations with the Palestinians?

Findley: Because I thought the U.S. government position was stupid and counterproductive. I was trying to fill a gap that shouldn't exist. By the way, Robert Straus was named as Jimmy Carter's chief point guy for the Middle East, and Straus applauded what I was doing. In fact, he said, "Let's keep in close touch." He said, "If I had approval, I'd be meeting with Yasser Arafat right now, but I can't get the okay from Jimmy Carter. I want you to go. I think you can be helpful to us."

DePue: So, Jimmy Carter wasn't aware…had not officially approved your meeting him. Is that what you're saying?

Findley: I would say so. That's correct, yeah.

DePue: You mentioned another person in the book, Harold Saunders of the State Department.

Findley: Oh, yes. Now, he was a very senior assistant secretary, high in the organization. He became enthusiastic about my book. He helped me immensely writing it. At that time, he was trying to influence Yasser Arafat, but he had no way to do it directly, I guess. Who knows what was done through some other channel? But, there are two occasions, that I remember, in which he asked me to contact Arafat on behalf of the U.S. government.

DePue: Was this before the first trip or after?

Findley: Oh yeah, after it, and probably a year or so later.

DePue: So, all these occasions are after you had the first visit there.

Findley: That's right. (laughing)

DePue: So, this was strictly on your own initiative that you were doing this.

Findley: That's right. And you will sit here, and, knowing politics, you'll say, "Why in the hell did Findley stick his neck into this when he didn't have to?" Well, I welcomed being on the cutting edge of initiatives that were needed.

DePue: Were these secret meetings?

Findley: Yes, they were, from the standpoint of Arafat. By the way, he was on "60 Minutes," [TV program] shortly after that meeting, and he was quizzed about one point I made. I think it was that they would renounce force, if the agreement was made. He didn't say, "That's not true." But, he said, "What I told Congressman Findley was…" and then he said something else. So, he ducked the question. Arafat was clever.

DePue: But, by that "60 Minute" interview, the word was out that you had met with him.

Findley: That's right, oh yes. Oh, I didn't hide it when I went home. I saw Brzezinski, but I invited…the press could come in. You're probably finding out more than you'd like to about me.

DePue: No, absolutely not. I'm asking the questions, so I'm hoping you answer. You brought this very significant statement that Arafat had passed on to you. What did you do with the information when you came back, then?

Findley: I requested a meeting with Carter, but they offered me a meeting with Brzezinski. I was disappointed, because he asked no questions. He listened to what I said and talked about tennis, and that was about it.

DePue: Was Brzezinski the National Security Advisor at the time?

Findley: Yeah, he was. Before, there were occasions when he and I were on the same team about Vietnam policy, so he was familiar with my habits, I guess. I was really disappointed that he displayed no interest, period. I knew that, what I had learned from Arafat, was a major change in the relationship of the PLO toward Israel, and I thought it was a step that they ought to welcome and then start talking further with him, to get further along. That didn't happen. He didn't show any interest, and it was because of… Well, I wanted the public to know what I was trying to do, so I did call a news conference.

DePue: After that meeting with Brzezinski.

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: Why do you think he had no interest? Was he legitimately not interested, or was he being cagey?

Findley: Oh, I think he was instructed not to quiz me—not that he was instructed not to quiz me—but not to quiz anybody.

DePue: Well, if he did, perhaps, then, that would legitimize the meeting in the first place, from the administration's part.

Findley: Yeah. I really don't think that would have been a serious problem.

DePue: I want to ask you, going back to the actual visit yourself, what were your impressions of Arafat?

Findley: He was jovial. He was a good listener. He was charming. I guess I met with him about five or six times, over his lifetime. He never tried to mislead me on anything that I know of. So, I think he played fair with me. I think he saw me and Chuck Percy as two people that were on his side. Whether we actually were or not may have been otherwise.

DePue: I'm sure you've heard the criticism about some Arab leaders, and I think this would be the case for Arafat, as well.

Findley: (Someone enters.) Hello, there, young lady. Were you lonesome? Excuse me.

DePue: Now, you had promised earlier that you wouldn't talk to her when she came back in. (both laugh)

Okay, again, the question I have here for you is, there are comments that Arab leaders, and perhaps Arafat, as well, will say one thing to westerners—to the American press, to American politicians—and talk very differently to their own Arab constituents.

Findley: That's probably true. The constituency that Arafat had was so varied. There were flamethrowers at one edge and peaceniks at the other. The man was able to be the spokesman of the whole group. Amazing attainment, yeah.

DePue: At the time you met him, 1978, had there been elections, where he had been democratically elected as the representative of the PLO?

Findley: I do not know. I know he identified himself as chairman of the executive committee of the PLO, and I presume… I don't know how he got there.

DePue: You made some mention in your book, as well, about he wasn't ostentatious about how he lived, how he presented himself. There are also allegations, now, that he became a very wealthy man while he was the leader of the PLO. I wondered if you can reflect on that.

Findley: I believe that is true. He married a woman who was ostentatious. I believe bank accounts, after his death, showed that he had quite an accumulation. I never did hear a figure, but it was a big sum of money that had been accumulated. You could argue it was accumulated for purposes, yet to be undertaken, that were legitimate. Or, it could have been accumulated for personal use, but he never showed any sign of opulence. I think he had the same threadbare uniform the last time I saw him that he wore the first time.

DePue: After that first meeting, in January, you said he reached out to you in November, and that's when this statement was given to you, in November of '78?

Findley: Yes.

DePue: Did he continue to reach out to you after that?

Findley: Things got very stormy. I'm a little fuzzy on this, but I think, shortly after that…

Wait a minute. It was '82, when the bombing of Beirut occurred. That was the fall of '82. So, during that interval, Israeli bombing in Lebanon was almost continuous, much of that time. To his credit, Jimmy Carter forced them to stop the bombing, at one time, by threatening the cut off of aid, and it worked.

DePue: This was the bombing in south Lebanon, where the PLO was setting up operations?

Findley: Well, it was bombing beyond that. They were indiscriminate in their bombing.

DePue: In September of 1978, President Carter—and this is his triumph in his administration—got the Israelis and the Egyptians together, and both sides signed at Camp David, of course.

Findley: Camp David, yeah. That was what year?

DePue: September of '78, so this is between your first and your second meeting with Arafat.

Findley: That's true. I hadn't thought of it that way.

DePue: Did you see any connections at all with that?

Findley: No.

DePue: From what you've told me, up to this point, even in November, the Carter administration, at least was holding you off, at hand's length, in terms of your interest.

Findley: That's true. That's true, yeah.

DePue: Did they ever give you support or encouragement, beyond the State Department officials you mentioned?

Findley: Well, in my trip to Paris, they did.

DePue: When was this?

Findley: That was before. That was '65, I believe. But, when I got involved in the Middle East, I can't think of any respect in which they seemed to give credence, although they used me several times. I knew I was being used, and I gladly helped.

DePue: Well, that's a provocative statement. How were you used? How did they use you?

Findley: By getting in touch with Arafat to get him to cancel, on one occasion, some sort of a showdown initiative in the Security Council. He was going to make trouble. He wouldn't prevail, but he was going to make trouble. They didn't want trouble. I relayed their request, and he dropped it.

DePue: This was during the Carter administration?

Findley: I'm sure it was.

DePue: What was the reaction, back in your home district, about your initiatives in reaching out to Arafat?

Findley: Well, one public meeting: here in Jacksonville, the man who was then the head of the Chamber of Commerce, a good friend, Vern Fernandez, publicly said, "Now, I can't understand why you're dealing with a man that is believed to be far worse than Genghis Khan." He probably reflected the view of many of my constituents. But, until November of '82, I had loyal supporters.

Whether right or wrong, they stayed with me, even when they disagreed. I had my own, personal political organization. I didn't depend on the precinct committeemen.

DePue: Did you have any thought, during this timeframe, the late '70s, to visit Israel, as well?

Findley: In fact, I did visit Israel in '72.

DePue: Do you remember much about that visit?

Findley: Yeah, I was sick as a dog. I had gotten sick on a visit in Egypt—ate something I shouldn't have eaten, and I was really sick. I had a couple of appointments, but I was in the hotel room, on rice and tea, most of the time.

DePue: During the time you were reaching out to Arafat, were you thinking, at that time, of stopping by Israel, as well, and getting their perspective?

Findley: Well, I didn't have to stop by. The rabbis in Springfield always, or seemed to always, meet my plane with lots of comments. I recall being in Chicago one day, and I had to catch a plane about an hour ahead. There was a phalanx of Jews that wanted to have my ear. I listened to them, and I vividly remember one of them saying to another, "Well what should Paul's next step be? Should he meet…" They identified a professor at some university, as if I ought to really understand the scene a little better than I did. I didn't respond, but I thought it was rather insulting. They were tough people.

DePue: "They" being who?

Findley: The Jewish community.

DePue: In Springfield?

Findley: Yeah, Springfield and elsewhere, Chicago, as well, yeah.

DePue: Did you understand at all their feelings about you and your endeavors to reach out to Arafat and the PLO?

Findley: Well, they were very plain in explaining them, yes. Did I accept their interpretation? I thought I was rendering a service to my country, by being a useful bridge of information between a very hostile power—not in government, but nevertheless, a very formidable political unit—that probably misunderstood America's position. I certainly felt that my government showed no interest whatever in understanding the PLO position.

DePue: What was their objection to you?

Findley: Sir?

DePue: The Jewish community in Springfield, for example, what were their criticisms about what you'd done?

Findley: Well, I was insensitive to the plight of the Jews, who were trying to make the success of Israel.

DePue: I think it was about this same time period that the Israelis start to set up settlements on the West Bank.

Findley: That began in the first prime ministership of Yitzhak Rabin, the esteemed hero of peace. That was his first term as prime minister. In his later campaign for reelection, he said, "I'm the one that began the settlements, but we did it very quietly, so nobody would notice."

DePue: How do you not notice settlements on the West Bank? After November of '78, do you know roughly how many other trips you made back to the Middle East, then, while you were still in office?

Findley: I think there were none, zero.

DePue: Well, you'd mentioned before, China policy, that that was something that, perhaps, we should talk a little bit about, as well.

Findley: I believe I was the first member of the House to publicly recommend that we establish trade in food as a beginning, looking toward normal diplomatic relations. I did it in the speech at Harvard, sponsored by the Ripon Society, a group of rather liberal Republicans.

DePue: I think we did talk about that a little bit the last session.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: Now we're going to get from foreign affairs and diplomacy back to politics, in a big way, because of the 1980 election. Apparently, what you had been doing in foreign affairs, in particular, and your position on abortion were going to get you a primary challenge.

Findley: Oh, that was a very active year. My opponent was the mayor of Quincy, David Nuessen, a popular mayor. When the primary was over, he had won 45% of the Republican vote, 45%. That 45% was exactly the percentage he got, here in Morgan County, the strongest part of my district. So, it was a signal that I was out of touch. He sponsored full-page ads, a series of them. It was a big budget item, and it made me suspect that he was getting a lot of funding from beyond the district.

DePue: What were the issues?

Findley: That I was spending time polishing the image of a terrorist named Arafat, that was the basic issue. I should have been tending to other things that were troublesome in the district.

DePue: You mentioned, in the book, that abortion was an issue, as well.

Findley: Oh yeah, always hot. I always declined to support a constitutional amendment. I just didn't feel that a constitutional amendment could take into account all human tragedies that might have to be dealt with suddenly in a family. I didn't support abortion, but I didn't think the federal government should try to outlaw it.

DePue: In terms of the loss of the Republican base that you'd always been able to count on before, was it more a result of your activities in the Middle East, or was it abortion?

Findley: I have no way to gauge it, but abortion was always a heavy burden. Dick Durbin presented himself, at that time, (chuckles) as being opposed to abortion, as a candidate.

DePue: But that's the '82 election.

Findley: Yeah, that's right. Now David Robinson: abortion was not an issue between us. I think he was probably opposed to any limitations on abortion.

DePue: That was the Democrat.

Findley: Yeah. He was a state representative.

DePue: Well, I want to set the stage a little bit more about the 1980 election, because it's a turning point in American history, as well.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: That's the Reagan year.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: November of 1979, Iranian students seize fifty-two Americans in the U.S. embassy. So, for that entire year now, we've got this hostage crisis going on in 1980. You've got the malaise of the end of the Carter years, as far as the American economy is concerned, so you've got very high interest rates.

Findley: High interest rates. They were terrible.

DePue: Yeah.

Findley: I felt sorry for Carter, but I felt sorry for the country, too.

DePue: Does that mean that you were a supporter of Carter in 1980?

Findley: I admired him on a lot of fronts, Panama Canal, for example. The China policy, he continued that from Nixon. On social issues, I felt much sympathy with his positions, so I did like him. I admired him as a human being. I thought he was probably better suited to the ministry than the presidency, but he was trying hard to be a very useful, effective president. In his post-presidency, he has been stellar, I think, time and time again.

DePue: How about his handling of the economy?

Findley: The economy was a wreck. There was no mood for multibillion dollar rescues or bailouts. That wasn't even under consideration. The economy wasn't a big issue in my race. I won fairly well. I took on the Israeli issue head on. One thing I did was to print about five thousand copies of David Robinson's financial report of receipts and expenditures. He had big donations from every state in the union, from people that wouldn't have any way to know anything about me. He ran ads in all, I believe—many if not all—Jewish publications, listing me as the worst anti-Semite that ever served in Congress. Well, that steamed up the Jewish community pretty well. And he raised a lot of money, about a half million.

DePue: But in a district that had what, 1%, maybe, of Jewish voters?

Findley: At the most, yeah. So, I duplicated that report, showing that almost all of his money came from outside the district and from strange names. I distributed that, and, I think, that had a great effect.

DePue: Now, that was your general election campaign. Did Nuessen also…Was he able to draw support, financial support, from the Jewish community?

Findley: Oh, by attacking me as the salesman for terrorist, Arafat. That was his recurrent theme. I was spending all my time trying to solve Arafat's problems, when I ought to be in the home district, a pretty good line.

DePue: Was this your initial education about the Jewish lobby?

Findley: That's right, yeah.

DePue: What were you finding out about the Jewish lobby, at the time?

Findley: Well, they had enormous potential in raising money. They didn't hamper my counterattack. In fact, that race was heavily covered in the *New York Times*. It was a national race of significance.

DePue: The general election, as well?

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: I think this is the same time period you became a Lincoln Laureate.

Findley: In 1980, I did. I've often wondered why.

DePue: What does that mean, being a Lincoln Laureate?

Findley: Well, they recognize you for a significant contribution to the heritage of Lincoln. I got through legislation that made the Lincoln home a part of the National Park Service, which was viewed in the Springfield area as a massive attainment.

DePue: Well, good thing you got the inkwell back, then.

Findley: I'll never forget that. (chuckles)

DePue: Sorry, I just had to throw that in there. I think you had an experience at the Republican National Convention, as well.

Findley: Oh, yes.

DePue: Didn't you go as a Bush supporter?

Findley: In '80, I believe I did, yes. It's curious that Democrats would make such an effort to embarrass me at a Republican convention, but they did. They organized a whole couple of busloads of people. They came in to try to get my attention and the attention of others in a hotel where Lucille and I stayed. I remember the day they were circling the lobby area, chanting, "Paul, Paul, he must go. He supports the PLO." Now, this is at a Republican presidential convention. I was a bystander. Oh, I guess I had a vote on the nomination process, but I was certainly not a figure of importance.

DePue: It probably was a curiosity to most of the main players there at the Republican convention.

Findley: It got publicity, and that's what they wanted, I'm sure.

DePue: Why Bush, rather than Reagan?

Findley: At that time, Bush's position on social issues was closer to mine than it was Reagan's. On abortion, for example, Bush, as a presidential candidate later on, was tougher. He was more proactive on constitutional amendment.

DePue: Well, the big issue between the two men, in the primary campaign, dealt with how they both were going to approach fixing the economy. Of course, the famous phrase from Bush, at that time, was that Reagan's supply side economics was "voodoo economics." How would you come down on that question?

Findley: I think it was Bush who challenged Reagan of those words. Was it? I'm not sure.

DePue: Right, that's what Bush said about Reagan's economic plan.

Findley: I didn't take part in that discussion at all.

DePue: You didn't have an opinion, one way or another, about how to fix the economy?

Findley: I'm sure that, whatever I said, was that we get into trouble if we spend more money than we take in. I think I left it pretty much there. By the way, I did not support… My memory's coming back a little bit. I was one of the last members to endorse Reagan tax cuts. He was all over the law as president. He was for higher taxes, at one point. He was for lower taxes, another. I was concerned about the rising federal debt, which was trivial then, but I thought it was massive.

DePue: That would have been '81 or '82?

Findley: Eighty. I'm speaking about '80. Eighty-two—

DePue: Well, you said you supported his efforts to change the tax rates, but that's after you would have been in office.

Findley: That's right, yeah, yeah. I was speaking about '82, yes.

DePue: Was it the *Playboy* incident, where you were going to get in *Playboy* or was that the 1980 campaign?

Findley: The 1980 campaign. David Robinson was my opponent. Somebody asked him what he's going to do about my *Playboy* publicity, and he said, "I won't touch it with a ten-foot pole." He didn't jump into it.

DePue: How did a picture of you—at least for a short time—get into the pages of *Playboy Magazine*? (Congressman laughs)

Findley: I happened to be on the House steps one day. There was a Republican photographer and a Democratic photographer, serving the House. The Republican photographer said there was a very famous Japanese photographer. He wanted to take a picture of women lobbying, to use to illustrate a larger article and would I mind being photographed with her? I should have said, "No," but I said, "Why not," so I was photographed. She turned out to be sort of a *Playboy* type gal, and, to her delight, *Playboy* decided to publish a whole page about her, with nude pictures around the edge, and then, a big picture of me with her in the center. When I heard about it, the presses were already underway. My only hope to stop them was Charles

Percy. He seemed to know everybody in Chicago, and it turned out that he did know the owner of *Playboy Magazine*. What's his name?

DePue: Hugh Hefner.

Findley: Hugh Hefner. Well, I went to Percy's office and sat down by him and told him my plight. I said, "I don't think it's going to kill my race, but it'd be embarrassing to be featured in a page of nude photographs," and, if I could avoid it, I'd like to. He tried to get Hefner on the phone. Hefner was flying, but I listened to Percy, as he told Hefner's principal aid that I had been on women's issues that Hefner had supported and that he knew that Hefner would not want to cause trouble for my reelection, because of that. And he said, "I will pay whatever it costs to shut down the press and rerun with a different photograph, instead of that page." To my amazement, it happened. Hefner shut it down—or his guys shut it down—and reran it. I don't think they saved any copies. I'd like one as a souvenir. (both laugh)

DePue: Listening to the story, I'm reminded… I think it was the '76 campaign, when Jimmy Carter did an interview with *Playboy*.

Findley: Oh, I know. He said…What was his comment? The next time he was going to speak from the heart, he would choose a different venue. (both laugh) But that solved the problem, and I have eternal gratitude to Chuck Percy. He could have skipped it. Hefner's guy could have said, "Nothing doing. We've got too much tied up in this."

DePue: I'm going to jump ahead of the timeline a little bit, since we're in the neighborhood of talking about Charles Percy, because he had a reelection. It came up in 1984. There are some similarities with what happened to him, I think.

Findley: Very much so. But the difference is that he supported every dollar that the State Department requested for Israel, plus he wanted to increase it. His only sins in the eyes of Israel's lobby were voting for a bill that approved the sale of certain types of aircraft to Saudi Arabia.

DePue: The AWACs (Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft).

Findley: AWACs, yeah.

DePue: The aircraft you put in the air…

Findley: The spy plane.

DePue: …to control the rest of the air traffic.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: That was it?

Findley: I think that's the only…Well, I don't know whether he ever met Arafat. I don't know. I'm not sure. That was the main issue.

DePue: That brings us up to your 1982 election. When you're talking about politics, you've always got to start the conversation with redistricting, so let's start with that. I've got a couple of maps here for you, Congressman, the 1980 district and the 1981 district, how things were going to change for you, based on those two.

Findley: They changed so much that I wasn't sure I wanted to run. Yes, I lost Morgan County. That was the worst blow of all.

DePue: That's your home area.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: Was that where your residence was at the time?

Findley: I always carried Morgan County. Even though the primary vote had been pretty close two years earlier, I knew I'd carry it. If I'd had Morgan, I would have won, no doubt.

DePue: We probably need to preface this with a discussion about how redistricting occurs in Illinois, and I'll just be quick about this. The 1970 Illinois State Constitution changed the rules about redistricting. At the time, the members of the convention thought they had assured a way to figure out how to do it effectively. If there was going to be some kind of a political deadlock that they would be forced to agree on something. Because, if there was a deadlock, what would happen, after that, was that there would be a draw out of a hat or a bowl or something. Whatever party won, would then control the redistricting. And 1981 would be the first time that was actually put to the test. I think, to the surprise of all those convention delegates who were still around in Illinois politics, there was a deadlock, and both parties decided to ride it out and to take their luck at the draw. The draw came up for the Democrats.

Findley: But the draw was not really a draw. The decision was left to a three-judge panel.

DePue: But, I think the third delegate of the panel was the name that was drawn out of a bowl or a hat.

Findley: I see. It could be. I was outvoted on the panel, two to one. My preference was rejected, in favor of the one that became law.

DePue: Well, it was statewide redistricting, correct?

Findley: That's right. There was no complaint about the process.

DePue: But the bottom line: the Democrats controlled the process in '81.

Findley: They did. They did. My son, let's see, he had a term that ended in '81. He had one term in the state House. He was elected in 1980, the same year I was reelected.

DePue: His name again?

Findley: He had a two-year term in the House of Representatives in Springfield, so he had something to do with the process that did me in. I think the speaker of the House was George Ryan, yeah, but he didn't put his foot down hard enough, I guess. He didn't prevail.

It was a tough district for me. The economy was down. Fiat-Allis was in trouble. Caterpillar was down. There were several major manufacturing employers, farm difficulty, too. It was a bad combination. I almost got reelected, but not quite.

DePue: Do you think it was primarily the economic issues that hurt you?

Findley: There was one debate. Dick Durbin did a good job. I didn't get in trouble over what I said, but I know I wasn't persuasive, as I should have been. I didn't do a good job.

DePue: Did you have a primary opponent that year?

Findley: No, I did know it.

DePue: You mentioned Dick Durbin as your opponent. What can you tell us about his background at that time?

Findley: He had run for lieutenant governor and lost. He had run for state senator and lost, both very close. He told some friend, "Well, if Findley beats me, I'll never be a candidate again." But he won by 1,400 votes, out of about 200,000--close. I learned later that the power broker of Republican politics, Bill Cellini, had decided not to encourage his troops to vote for me. That's the first time that happened. He'd always been on my side. My staff leader, who took time off the payroll to be my campaign leader, Donald Norton, told me that Cellini had demanded several times that we fire—from our list of volunteers, from volunteers—fire them.

Bob Church was the deputy to a Democrat, who was mayor of Quincy. He'd always been a supporter of mine through the years, always a grand fellow. I'm glad that Don stood by him. He said, "Bill, I can't do that. He's a volunteer, first of all. He's a good friend. He does good work. Why should I fire him?" Cellini said, "I want you to fire him." And, after the election,

Cellini made a point of telling Don Norton, "Well, you see what it pays to be on the team." In other words, his team.

DePue: Why did he want you to fire Church?

Findley: I never heard, never heard.

DePue: No explanation.

Findley: Don didn't even tell me this, until after the election, and I never pursued it. Well, it's probably because he was deputy to the Democrat who was mayor of Springfield. That was a party position, in his eye.

DePue: This was an election—you alluded to this before—that got an awful lot of national recognition. Why?

Findley: Well, I had some national coverage of my activities. I wonder why else.

DePue: I assume, in that case, we're talking about the whole issue with Palestine.

Findley: Yes.

DePue: That would be your national.

Findley: Yes, that would be the main one, but China policy was a bit controversial for a while. The redistricting was a major factor. I'd lost the heart of my Republican support. I gained areas that knew little about me and were heavily Democratic, like Christian County and Macon County.

DePue: Well, just looking at the map, I realize one thing going on here. In 1980, there were twenty-four congressional districts. In 1982, there were twenty-two.

Findley: Yeah, that's right.

DePue: Obviously, they had carved out yours, targeting you for defeat?

Findley: Maybe they thought I could win, and they could use the muscle elsewhere. It was a combination of factors, no other word for it.

Dick Durbin was a far better candidate than David Robinson. David Robinson was a sloppy dresser, unattractive. He was reputed to be a gay, which was bad news then.

DePue: Was that something that the public knew, or was in the air?

Findley: Well, I didn't spread it, but it probably got around.

DePue: I know you had an awful lot of money coming into that race, as well, it sounds like.

Findley: Both of the last two races, I believe, involved $1 million, about a half a million for each of us.

DePue: Was that entirely different from your…

Findley: That was an all-time high for Illinois.

DePue: Was that entirely different from your previous experiences?

Findley: Well, the 1982 race, yes, it was a big break. I felt I had to match the money raised against me, and I did. In the previous campaign, in 1980, I won that by a nice margin. I doubt if I spent more than forty thousand.

DePue: So, this is a factor of times ten.

Findley: Oh yeah, oh yeah, massive difference.

DePue: Well, we know where the Democrat money was coming from. From what you were saying, it was coming from Jewish communities across the country.

Findley: That's right. That's right.

DePue: Where did you find the money?

Findley: Well, there were PACs, Political Action Committees. And I was convinced by my campaign leaders that I had to raise more money. So, I broke a tradition. Before, I'd never actively sought out PAC money, but I did then.

DePue: As the election got close, were you optimistic about your chances?

Findley: Well, the surveys were taken periodically, because of the public interest, and I was ahead in late August. But, I think the economy, the district lines and the debate were the factors.

DePue: Now, you mentioned that before—part of that economic equation—especially since this is still primarily a rural, farming district, I would think…

Findley: It was farming, yeah.

DePue: …was the farm economy, and that was in the big banking crisis days of the farm foreclosures.

Findley: That's right. That's right, yeah.

DePue: Okay, tell me about election night. What do you remember?

Findley: Well, I thought, based on late polling, that I would squeak by. I knew it was going to be one or two percent, but I'd always had such good results from my private organization that I thought I'd come through. It was obvious, I didn't. I

tried to… I drove by Dick Durbin's office, campaign office. I wanted to congratulate him. He had closed up. I didn't seek out where he had gone, but I put a little note of congratulations under the door—which he probably never saw—and I went to bed. I should have done more to thank my troops, which were gathered at the campaign office. But, it was quite a shock, and I decided not to.

DePue: What was Lucille's reaction to your defeat?

Findley: She was relieved, really. She was glad it was over. I think she wanted me to win, but I know she was happy when I was done.

DePue: You ran for office ten times and won?

Findley: Well, I ran for the general election office eleven times and won. I had competition in three primaries, so that was fourteen elections that were rather heated.

DePue: During any of that time, had Lucille ever tried to suggest that maybe you should do something else with your life?

Findley: No, never did. She knew I loved it, and I liked to be on the firing line. I have ever since.

DePue: Well, apparently, you were. How about the children?

Findley: Well, I think they probably paid a bigger price than Lucille did. They were jerked out of school when I was elected. And then, when I returned to Pittsfield to reside, in '81, they returned to Pike County Schools. They were happy about that. Then, in December, they had to change again, when I was reelected.

DePue: Was politics in their blood? Obviously, your son had followed your footsteps.

Findley: Well, when he graduated from college, he announced that he would never be a candidate and never want to have a weekly newspaper. But, within a year or so, he was doing both. (both chuckle) He's had a political job ever since. He was assistant for Bob Michel, the Republican leader, for many years, and he ran for mayor and lost to Ron Tendick, a highly popular guy.

DePue: Rob was the name?

Findley: Ronald Tendick, mayor of Jacksonville for twenty years. He [the Congressman's son] chose not to run for anything else, but he has enjoyed hugely being on the board of trustees of Lincoln Land Community College for many years. Let's see. He's had a paid job as the commissioner on the prisoner review board. That has lasted over ten years.

DePue: What's your son's name again?

Findley: Craig, C-r-a-i-g.

DePue: Well, now that you're out of office, did you know what you wanted to do?

Findley: Well, I immediately had a call from a famous person, who still doesn't want me to mention his name. He suggested I write a book. He suggested I call it "They Dare to Speak Out." He said, "There is an organization in Massachusetts, a Middle East research foundation fund that will provide some income during the time when you write the book. So, I did it.

I thought, for a brief time, that I would try being a lobbyist for certain groups that I believed in, but it didn't materialize. This book opportunity came along, and it demanded action fast. So, I spent two years writing it.

DePue: Were you getting any kind of an advance, or were you living on savings?

Findley: Well, I got an advance. It was trivial, maybe $2,000. I had trouble getting a publisher. All of the Madison Avenue places that normally would want to have a book that is going to be a big seller, said no. Several of them told me that they would like to publish it, but they would pay a big price with their staff, as well as with their clientele. They didn't want to touch it.

One of them was a major Bible publisher. I can't even give you his name now, but his…After he read the manuscript, he said, "I'm so happy to see this book written." He was Lebanese. He had changed his name to an Anglo-Saxon name to avoid an Arab name, as publisher. But he was prancing around. He got down on the carpet and beat his fists on the rug and said, "This has to be published, but I won't do it." (both laugh)

DePue: The backer that you're not willing to mention here, do you know what his motive was for encouraging you to write this?

Findley: He was Lebanese, and his parents were very distressed over the plight of Arabs, generally.

DePue: Was he a Christian Lebanese?

Findley: Yes. You'll figure out his name.

DePue: How did your life evolve after you published the book?

Findley: Busy. It was an instant success. I got on all of the major TV shows. I was on "The Today Show," and I asked Gumbel…

DePue: Bryant Gumbel?

Findley: That's right. I asked him, before the show, if I could use a toll-free number, where people could buy my book. He said, "Well, I can't stop you." That's all he said. To me, that was an invitation to say it, so I said it. They sold thousands of books that day. (both chuckle)

DePue: So, who did end up publishing the book?

Findley: A very small firm in Westport, Connecticut, called Lawrence Hill Books. Lawrence Hill was a…He and his wife owned it. His wife was Jewish. They were both critics of Zionism, and they were both glad to publish a book that they saw involved the free speech issue, free press and free speech. They had a woman who went through my manuscript, made a lot of improvements.

I moved, in the process that second year, to Pittsfield…No, to Jacksonville. I sent the final manuscript to Tom Dine, the head of AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee]. I sent it with a courteous note, in which I said, "I want this to be factually correct. I don't expect you to applaud the book, but I'd like to have your help in avoiding errors that could be embarrassing to some people."

I never heard from him, but a friend of mine on his staff—who's always been my close friend—got a copy of the memo that was prepared by the staff who examined my book. Before the actual composition of the text occurred, I had the advantage of about two pages of single-spaced items, pointing out minor issues that needed to be changed. So, I had that advantage; so, it sailed through. Nobody ever filed suit against it.

DePue: How would you describe the themes, the main issues, that you are laying out in the book?

Findley: It described how individuals and organizations had been buffeted around by Israel's lobby.

DePue: Define what you mean by—

Findley: Buffeted?

DePue: …Israel's lobby.

Findley: It is not just one organization. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, AIPAC, is the focal point of the Jewish community, but the umbrella group is the Council of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations. I think there at least twenty organizations whose presidents come together under that group. The organization that did most of the prominent counterattack was AIPAC.

DePue: How would you explain their effectiveness, because we're talking again…What's percentage of Jewish population in the United States, two or three percent? So, how do they have such an oversized AIPAC?

Findley: Well, let me illustrate it. I got on "The Today Show," but a prominent Jewish leader was on the same program, side-by-side with me. I got on Charlie Rose's show, but the same thing happened. Almost always, whenever I got a chance to publicize the theme of my book, I had to deal with a Jewish competitor, right there on the mic.

DePue: Do you think that was an example where AIPAC was insisting that happen, or was that just journalists trying to be fair?

Findley: Oh, sure. Well, they would say it was just a matter of fairness, but I've never seen any of the many controversial books that are on the shelves of the bookstores treated that way so consistently. It was obviously an organized counterattack. Maybe it helped me as much as it hurt me, because it probably widened public interest in the event.

DePue: In terms of selling books, it was a good thing.

Findley: That's right. It could have been a good thing. Organizations were just thrilled. Jim Abourezk organized… He is a former senator. He organized the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. That goes by the acronym ADC. That group, on a very organized basis, urged people to buy my book and pass it out. They urged people to tune in when I was going to be on the tube. They invited me to speak, and I had big crowds, enthusiastic crowds. I was a novelty. I was the first non-Arab ever to take an interest in the Arab cause.

DePue: So, you were giving talks across the country then?

Findley: Hmm?

DePue: All over the country?

Findley: Yes. In fact, the ADC provided a fund of $50,000 to finance a book-selling campaign nationwide, which I did.

DePue: You mentioned also that what the book was doing, in part, was talking about how individuals and institutions were getting—I think you used the phrase, "buffeted around." What do you mean by that?

Findley: Marginalized. [to himself] What's a good example?

DePue: Would you consider yourself or Charles Percy of being victims of the lobby?

Findley: We lost because of the lobby. Does that make us a victim? If it does, we're victims. Both of us would have won easily, had it not been for lobby opposition, no doubt about it. No other organization could have raised a half million bucks to knock me off. My friend from within AIPAC said that AIPAC spent 75% of their resources to beat me. Then, they did the same thing

to beat Percy, two years later. Had that not occurred, we would have won. No doubt about it.

DePue: You also mentioned that you're happy you got defeated.

Findley: I never would have written a book about Israel's lobby. I never would have become the hero of a lot of people—not just Arabs—who think that I stood up to power and paid the price and went down in flames. So, as I look back on it, it was probably the best thing that could have happened to me, because I was the victim, let's say, the first national victim of a group that has tremendous political resources, even though it's not numerous.

To back up about that point of the Jewish community being small, it really isn't small. The fundamentalist community of Christians, headed by Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and others, flourishes today. You can go in Jacksonville, down Lincoln Avenue, and find the Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church on Sunday morning. It's become an enormous church, cars all over the place.

The fundamentalist denominations of Protestant faith are the fast growing. They're easily persuaded that a strong Israel is a part of God's plan, that at the Day of Judgment, a battle will rage on the plain of Armageddon, and the forces of good, led by Jesus, will prevail. And, at that moment, those who are Jewish will either be converted instantly to Christianity, or they will be destroyed. This is the fundamental belief of the fundamentalist churches, and it's as solid today as it was back then.

Let me cite just one experience I had while I was still in office. I was in Carlinville, a little town. The county clerk, a Republican, a charming young man, heard me talk about the Middle East. After I spoke, he came to me with a worried look in his eye and said, "I like you. I'm going to vote for you, but you're working against God's plan, and you need to change, for your own salvation." He was sincere. I'm sure there are millions of people like that today in America, and they represent a solid resource for whatever the State of Israel does.

DePue: Do you think the writing of the book and the reaction to the book afterwards has been the thing that's defined your life and career, after you retired from politics?

Findley: It does, I believe. I think it cuts both ways. Those who are tempted in office to criticize Israel, if they read my book, they'll probably say, "I don't want to go through what Findley had. I'll vote for Israel." It discouraged a lot of people. It encouraged others to try to get things changed.

DePue: Well, let's jump up to the present day. President Barack Obama got into a second term, and as oftentimes happens, you have to replace some cabinet officers. His appointment for the new secretary of defense was Chuck Hagel.

I'm sure you know what I'm talking about in that respect. I wonder if you can comment on the problems that Hagel got into with the Republican base, his own Republican base, because of his comments about the Israel lobby.

Findley: It made me ashamed to be a Republican, just terrible. I'm not sure the Republican Party can survive. It's a mixture of very disparate groups. The party that prevailed when I was in office was more a centrist party on everything. Chuck Hagel has shown, I think, wisdom and nerve, but it remains to be seen whether that wisdom and nerve will really prevail, when he's in office. After all, he's a servant of the president, and Obama has not shown any sign of trying to change things in the Middle East.

But I salute Hagel for going through the ordeal of the hearings. I wish he had been a little more smooth in his dealing with the really tough grilling he got. I had some correspondence with him while he was in the Senate, and it was all positive. His thinking, then, was along the lines of mine, and I thought it was great. He was seeking the presidency at that time. How he'll emerge is anybody's guess. He may not last.

DePue: I wanted to ask you a series of questions about world events that focus on the Middle East. It's been in the forefront of the newspapers, ever since you stepped out of office, basically. But let's start with the Iraq War. Well, let's start with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990.

Findley: Had Ike been president, I believe he would say that issue is beyond the perimeter of our national interest. George W. Bush jumped into it immediately, and I'm sure he had a number of reasons to do it. He wanted stability in the Middle East. He didn't want to see Saddam Hussein gain more power. He had financial interests. His family had heavy investments in that region, very region, and I don't think he could keep those from his mind. The government that he restored was anything but a Democratic state, shameful. The ruler had the—

DePue: You're talking about Kuwait now.

Findley: Yeah, Kuwait. The ruler had the tradition—and I guess he still has it—of changing one of his four wives every year. When our forces regained control for his government, the first thing the Army Corp of Engineers had to do was to replace the gold fixtures in his bathroom. That doesn't strike me as the kind of guy we ought to send people in to die for.

DePue: Well, I know a big part of the concern, at that time, was what happens if Saddam Hussein turns his attention next to Saudi Arabia, and now you're talking about the world's oil supply. You didn't see that as a threat?

Findley: You know, going into Kuwait provoked, I believe, a record vote in the House over war powers. And wasn't that the issue when Tom, a speaker of the House, a great guy, spoke—

DePue: Foley?

Findley: Foley. Foley spoke against going in. It was a close call, I think. We should have gone in under conditions that were clearly set forth, that we weren't going to reinstall the existing ruler. We're going to get Saddam out, but let the public decide who would be next. That's what I would have insisted on.

DePue: So, you're talking about going into Iraq, we should have insisted on having a different ruler than Saddam Hussein.

Findley: No. We're talking about going into Kuwait.

DePue: Okay.

Findley: Yeah. The ruling family there isn't worth keeping. We shouldn't send people in to fight and die, unless we're going to improve the scene.

DePue: How about your views on the Intifada? I don't have a specific date for that, but the continuous struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis that was flaring up through much of the 1990s, I believe.

Findley: Well, I think it's probably not over. There will be another one, and the Palestinians actually will lose again. It's one of the sad chapters of American history, in my view, because we have turned a blind eye to what they've been doing for forty years, gradually taking over—by force of arms, really—land that doesn't belong to Israel. Now, some will dispute, "Well, who does it belong to?" I think the logical, legal, moral, proper answer is to the people who have occupied it for two thousand years, which is the Palestinians, mainly. It's a sad chapter for our country, I think. And I don't see any answer, because this Zionism is actually endorsed by Bible-based theologies, accepted so broadly here in this country. I think it's a fair estimate to say that there are probably seventy million people in the fundamentalist community that believe that a strong Israel is a part of God's plan.

DePue: What do you say, then, to those on the other side of the equation, who think Israel has no right to exist, period? What happens to the Jewish people then?

Findley: Well, I would say, in 1948, you might have had a strong case, but the Palestinian community has accepted, repeatedly, by record vote, support of the National Council for the existence of Israel within pre '67 borders.

DePue: Okay, the next incident I wanted to ask you about was 9/11. What do you remember about that day?

Findley: That night, I attended a meeting of the Literary Union, here in Jacksonville, and I asked the members for a show of hands on how many would recommend going to war against…I forget how I cast it. You see, the enemy was so

imprecise. I forget what I said, but I was amazed that most of them raised their hand. They were ready to go to war the next day.

DePue: Were you listing some countries?

Findley: It seemed to me a terrible criminal act, not an act of war, but a criminal act. Our response should not be to go to war against Afghanistan, an impoverished nation, if one ever existed. To bomb that to the daylights made no sense. It wasn't going to get Saddam Hussein out of the hills, if he was there. And Saddam was saying—

DePue: You mean Osama Bin Laden.

Findley: Osama Bin Laden. I thought we ought to deal with it as a criminal act and do everything we could to find out who actually masterminded it and put them to death or give them a life sentence.

DePue: In absentia, to try him in absentia?

Findley: No, try to find the guilty people, arrest them and bring them to justice, but not to go to war against a nation that had no ability to cause us trouble and never had, really.

DePue: You don't think the Taliban was actively supporting Al Qaeda? They were certainly harboring Al Qaeda.

Findley: Al Qaeda exists. It's not a government. It's not an organized military force. It comes and goes. At one time, our own experts contended that less than two hundred Al Qaeda people were in Afghanistan at any time. I don't like to see us go to war, period. If there's any other way to deal with a challenge, we ought to take it. The quest for those guilty may be a failure, but we ought to stick to that avenue, instead of making war against two nations—not just Afghanistan, but Iraq—as if they were co-partners in this endeavor.

I don't think the answer to 9/11 has been found. I've never discussed it publicly, but there's an organization of several hundred architects and engineers who say the evidence is overwhelming that explosives, high explosives, had been located on intervals of the floor levels of all the buildings, including the one that wasn't hit by an airplane, but nevertheless, collapsed the same way. I don't prejudge it, but I think it's something that ought to be examined.

Unfortunately, they didn't deal with 9/11 as a crime. There was no guard ribbon around the area, keeping people out. In fact, they had bulldozers coming in in nothing flat to haul away the rubbish.

DePue: Well, they hoped that there would be survivors they would find.

Findley: I guess. Were there? I don't know. I forget. Were there any that survived?

DePue: There was just a handful of survivors, but overwhelmingly, the people that were lost, they never found any evidence.

Findley: Well, the barrier would not keep rescue efforts from being made, but it would be normal to leave the evidence in the hole to examine it, to try to determine what really brought the buildings down. I'm just dissatisfied with the way the whole thing is handled.

DePue: Do you have reason to doubt that it was those aircraft that took it down?

Findley: Yes. The experts on engineers and architects say that the heat of those burning planes—the fuel that was burning there—would not reach a level that would melt the framework of the building. They said that would not do it. It did a lot of damage, but just the planes hitting the top floors would not have brought the building down. If they would have brought them down, they would have tilted them over, as a result of the force of hitting it. There was no tilting. It was a straight drop.

DePue: I suspect I know the feeling on the next question, but the War on Iraq in 1993.

Findley: It's probably the most stupid war we ever undertook. There was no evidence that Saddam was involved in 9/11. I think that's a fair statement. There was no way to know how our forces would be treated on landing. I know Dick—

DePue: Cheney?

Findley: Yeah, Cheney, said they'd be greeted with flowers and ribbons and joy. Instead, we probably killed many thousands of people with our assault, the bombardment. Iraq, for all of Saddam's evil behavior, it was one of the most progressive Arab states of all. Women's rights were advanced, far beyond any other Arab state that I know. They had a medical system and an educational system that was pretty universal and advanced. Their history is unique. Today, look at the mess.

DePue: Do you believe that Iraq would be better off if Saddam would still be in power?

Findley: I could never say that. I was there several times, visiting a certain family called Al Khafaji family. They told me about the night that one of their young people was called to the wall around their home. The police wanted to question him. They never heard a word about him after that.

DePue: Was this during Saddam's regime?

Findley: Yeah, yeah. He was riding high. I got acquainted with a man that was his chief interpreter from Arabic to English. I've got his card in my file in the office.

He said that he believed that, if they would have a truly public vote, that he believed that Saddam, with all of the criticism he has, would still win reelection, win election. But one of the members of that same Al Khafaji family wouldn't speak to me, except when he was inside a car, with all the windows closed. He called him [Saddam Hussein] a viper, a bloodthirsty viper.

Iraq, at the time I was there on those various visits, there was a mixing of Shiites and Sunnis, intermarriage of them. There were no barriers to try to separate the two groups. That's gone. I think our experience there was most unfortunate, for us, as well as everybody else.

DePue: Did you believe the claims the Bush administration had about the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam was developing?

Findley: Well, I had no reason to know, except that I thought the inspector general of the UN…I forget his name, a very, very impressive guy. He has said that their inspectors had never been denied access to any place they wanted to inspect. They had found no trace of it. There was evidence that, in the security files, that he had had some nuclear development, but had been convinced that it was going to be a handicap and destroyed it. I think he had the yen for a nuclear power, but turned back from it. And, when they believed that such weapons existed, they did not.

DePue: Of course, there is the one incident, where the Israeli air raid destroyed a nuclear power plant.

Findley: That is true. And from that, I would say that I imagine, at one point, he was trying to build his own nuclear system.

DePue: How about the rise of a very fundamentalist strain of Islam that has radicalized a lot of communities around the world?

Findley: Are you speaking of Wahhabi?

DePue: Yes.

Findley: It is, in my view, despicable. For some peculiar reason, the Wahhabi clerics in Saudi Arabia are actually more powerful than the monarch, the king. They have a domain of authority that he doesn't touch. I was with the leader of Muslims in Los Angeles this past week. He said the Wahhabi influence is bad, wherever it goes. They'll build $1 million mosque. Then, they install an imam that preaches the Wahhabi system, which is out of vogue and rejected by most Muslims that I know.

DePue: What would be your opinion about the concern today about Iran's development of nuclear weapons? Are you as concerned as American official policy is on that issue?

Findley: Well, if the Iranians, at one point, didn't think they needed a nuclear weapon, they probably do now. There's been so much publicity, trying to restrain their program, that it may have been peaceable in its entirety at one time, but right now, I'll bet, in the back of their mind, they've concluded that, we've got to get that weapon for our own defense.

DePue: Well, Iran also has the reputation in the world community of being the major backer of terrorism, and most of that terrorism is directed against Israel.

Findley: Well, terrorism is a word that probably ought to be replaced in the English language, because it means so many different things. The efforts of Hamas and Hezbollah have been directed against the occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and east Jerusalem, by force of arms by the State of Israel. Now, to Israelis, that's terrorism on their part, but to other people, including the Palestinians and Arabs, the effort to end the occupation is humane.

DePue: So, the rocket attacks that emanate from the Gaza Strip that is not occupied—at least most of the time has not been occupied by the Israelis—into Israel territory is humane?

Findley: I think it caused the death of two people, injury of two others. In retaliation, the Israeli mounted iron dome—was that it?—using phosphorous bombs, anti-personnel bombs, killing…I don't know, was it fourteen hundred people in Gaza?

DePue: In Gaza.

Findley: Yeah.

DePue: I don't know what the figure would be.

Findley: The kill ratio is just a hundred to one, something like that.

DePue: Are the rocket attacks from Gaza a response to the continuing occupation of the West Bank, do you think?

Findley: Yes. Yes, I do, and the continued isolation of Gaza. Gaza has no way to deal with the outside world, hardly ever, hardly at all.

DePue: Now, they share a border with Egypt, so part of that isolation had to do with the Egyptian government, as well.

Findley: That's right, and that barrier still stands.

DePue: Well, that brings us up to the contemporary time and the Arab Spring. Your feelings about what's been happening in the last two years in places like Egypt that continue to happen in Syria right now. Let's start with Egypt.

Findley: I think there is a time when a revolution is merited, as expressed in our Declaration of Independence. Mubarak was hardly a benevolent ruler. I think the protest against Mubarak was thoroughly justified, but the protest never had leadership. No one, out of that vast bunch of humanity, came to the top.

A couple of foreigners were considered, Al Barady, and I forget who the other one was. Those were not homegrown protestors.

I think they went into the elections without organization, except for the brotherhood. And the brotherhood, itself, is a mixture of good and evil. I guess the center is pretty reasonable, but the leadership of the brotherhood has been in prison for years, under Mubarak. He didn't permit real competition, politically. He kept the leaders in prison, and Brosie was one of those incarcerated for a long time. His opponent in that election seemed to be another military leader, like—

DePue: Like Mubarak?

Findley: Yeah. It's a shame. I wish it would have been better. Maybe it'll turn out okay, but it's a mess right now. They don't even collect garbage.

DePue: You've studied the Arab world for a long time now, close to thirty years. Is there something about the Arab culture, or Muslim religion, that makes the emergence of democracies a difficult thing?

Findley: I think there's something about dictatorship that brings out the worst. I'm no scholar on anything, much less Islam, but I believe that the government envisioned by Mohammad was one of consensus, not heredity, one of fairness to minorities, not exclusion. In fact, there were several efforts at establishing a true Islamic state, shortly after Mohammad's death, and the government included minority people. Apparently, they did a pretty good job of protecting the human rights of all of the population. I don't think the flaw is in the religion, as much as the travail that has come about with the ascendency of ruling classes that were there out of self-protection and self-enrichment, more than human rights.

DePue: Here is another criticism that you get, about the reason that dictatorship has prevailed and that there hasn't been a more economic development, is that the power elites in a lot of these countries used the situation of this continual war with Israel as a way to hold on to their own power. Would you think there's some relevance to that comment?

Findley: That's true. Also, there's a criticism that, in too many cases, the rulers felt constrained, because of financial support, to do the bidding of the U.S., instead of respond to what the will of the electorate was.

We established a pretty comprehensive system. We didn't manipulate Saudi Arabia, but they were always in our camp. They did what we wanted in

a crisis. We did what they wanted in their crisis. We really weren't tuned in with the average people of Saudi Arabia, nor were we in Egypt or Syria.

Syria was a strange, strange government. I met the elder Assad twice. I met him when I was on my way to South Yemen, the first time. Then, shortly before he died, I had an opportunity to be in Syria, and I met him again. The guy was glad to see me, and he kept asking me to not hurry away, and he'd like to talk some more. He also opened the curtains of this palace he had on the hill, and he said, "There's my city. There's Damascus. I know everything that's going on there. There are no secrets." (laughs)

DePue: He probably had a powerful enough secret police that he did know most everything.

Findley: That's right. That's exactly the point. The first time I met him, he complimented me on my book. Oh, Mubarak did, too. He said he read the whole thing. They've had benevolent despots a time or two. I think Hussein was pretty good in Jordan, but he was rough at times.

DePue: I don't believe he was too excited about having this flood of Palestinians into his territory, after the '67 war.

Findley: Well, the Israelis, AIPAC, said, 'Well, we've already got our Palestinian state. It's Jordan." And the majority of the population of Jordan is Palestinian. But, I think it's important to keep in mind that Israel gained control of everything it has through force of arms, not through the consent of the government.

DePue: You're talking about since 1948, the initial establishment of Israel?

Findley: Yeah, yeah.

DePue: I want to ask you about one other… If ever there was an intractable problem in the world, this one word, I think, would describe it, "Jerusalem," because that has been the thing that has bogged down negotiation between Arabs and Jews ever since 1948.

Findley: It's viewed by the world community as property separatum. I'm not sure of the Latin, but as separate property. I believe that's the way the UN views it today, whereas Israel claims it's their property, fee simple. It's the center of the three monotheistic faiths. It always has been, always will be. I really think the UN proposition is ideal, and maybe it's the most attainable.

DePue: To let the UN administer the city?

Findley: Let it be an independent state, yes, with the three monotheistic religions having a part in government.

DePue: You had a long career in Congress, and then you've had an equally long career after that, in pursuing the issues we've been discussing here for the last hour or so. Of all the things that you've done in your life, what would you look back on with the most pride and say, I'm proud to have done that?

Findley: The most lasting is the Lincoln home. By making it a part of the Park Service, it gained the best possible assurance of good management forever. If it had stayed state property, financing would always be a challenge. Management would always be under attack. It would be hard to maintain the level of professionalism that it deserves. It was a relatively easy project, but I must say it's given me great satisfaction in the years after I left, because I occasionally go there. It gives me quite a lift to think that I had some small role in having it situated well.

There was a big law office building where the parking lot is today. One of the major chains that build Holiday Inns is a sample of it. There was a proposal for an eight-story hotel/motel right across the street from the Lincoln home. There was a two-story souvenir shop right across the other street. There was another souvenir shop two doors north of it. The neighborhood was really rundown. It was one of the poorest parts of Springfield. Maybe it still is; I don't know. But that's the achievement that I treasure most.

I am going to give a talk soon in Pittsfield about the influence Abraham Lincoln had on my life. It began when I was in the fourth grade. It's never stopped. This was the crown achievement of that experience.

DePue: Well, we've come full circle. We started with Lincoln, and we're going to finish with Lincoln. You must know, though, that that's not how history will remember you. Are you satisfied with how you will be remembered in history?

Findley: Well, of course, I don't really know. Probably I'll be insignificant in another twenty years. If I am remembered, I'll probably be remembered as one who was hostile to the State of Israel, and I wouldn't like that characterization. I'd rather be remembered as one who fought for the dignity of all people, regardless of race or color or religion.

The reason I'm drawn to the Palestinians is that our country has turned a blind eye to their suffering. Not only that, we have financed the government that has brought most of the misery upon them. We could have changed it by a simple declaration of aid suspension that would have been effective, and we still are not even close to that.

DePue: Do you remember any moment that was most exhilarating in your career?

Findley: Defeating Richard Nixon's veto of the War Powers Act.

DePue: Well, these aren't the answers I would expect to hear, so that's why we ask the questions. Very interesting. How about the most painful experience you had in the political arena?

Findley: Well, defeat by Dick Durbin, but I got over it.

DePue: I've been asking the questions for a long time. I'll give you the opportunity, as we close up here today, to make any final comments that you'd like to make.

Findley: I am deeply worried about the future of my country. One of the impacts of 9/11 was to make us afraid, as a nation, about tomorrow. We've gone to extremes in trying to establish this thing called security. We've got thousands and thousands of people spying on American citizens right now. It's all they do. They've come into being, really in great numbers, since Obama became president. And, of course, the tide began under George Bush, the second.

We have weakened severely our protection of civil rights, and I don't see either political party taking on the challenge. We need a guy with the nerve of Teddy Roosevelt to shake up our system and rethink where we are and whither we're tending, and just get back on the right roots. We need a Lincoln, actually. But every country needs a Lincoln, every day, I think.

DePue: You mentioned earlier, you thought the Republican Party had become much less a centrist party.

Findley: That's right.

DePue: How about your views of the Democrat Party of today?

Findley: Well, it's not very well led. It doesn't have a figure like FDR or Harry Truman, who had some ideas that just had to be advanced. I came to admire Harry Truman a lot.

DePue: Congressman, you've already written a book. Why did you agree to be interviewed?

Findley: Claire; she's the guilty party. (both laugh)

DePue: That's your assistant you're talking about.

Findley: Of course, I would like to be remembered. I think everybody would. And I'd like to have some influence over how I am remembered. I think this process probably does something in that direction. But, when you consider the multitude of House members that have come and gone, I don't stand out about the bunch. I doubt if I'll be remembered, but I've tried.

DePue: Well, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you, to get to know you quite a bit better and to preserve this piece of history, because I think it's worth preserving.

Findley: Ralph Nader was in his top of his being, when I was young in Congress, and he had these Nader Raiders all over the place. He gave them a job to do. One year, early in my career, he had a four-page personal history, or summary, done about every member of the House of Representatives. I'm not sure I ever saw the one written about me, but I think it started with these words, "Paul Findley's voting record is bewildering."

DePue: And apparently you take some pride in that.

Findley: Yeah. I do. (laughing)