

GEORGE CREWS
FEBRUARY 18, 1999

ALICIA ROUVEROL: This is Alicia Rouverol of the Southern Oral History Program. I'm going to be interviewing George Crews of NECD in Durham, North Carolina. Today's date is February 18, 1999. This is my tape number 21899GC.1. This interview is part of the New Immigrants Project, which is part of Listening for a Change.

So maybe we could start with the history of the NECD or whatever you want to share in that regard. Then missions, goals, kind of projects you all do. That'd be great. Whatever you want to share on NECD would be great.

GEORGE CREWS: For the history behind NECD, it's been started about four or five years ago by Willard Perry, Callina Smith and Carl Washington. They knew of the issues that were going on in the community of Northeast Central Durham and felt that they needed to be addressed: the crime, substandard housing and lack of education. So they come together with various communities within Northeast Central Durham and formed the Partners Against Crime.

AR: So they formed partners Against Crime first?

GC: Um hmm.

AR: Ah ha. Okay, good.

GC: Partners Against Crime is a core group, which empowers Northeast Central Durham, the executive board. So Partners Against Crime was the first organization formed of all of the communities. There are eight communities within Northeast Central Durham. And please don't ask me to name them all because I can't remember them all.

AR: Okay. Maybe I'll ask you at some later date or something. [laughs]

GC: Just a few of them are Albright, Y.E. Smith, Old Five Points, East End-

AR: You've got like Edgemont?

GC: Edgemont is one. Wellons Village is another and Hoover Road.

AR: Edgemont, Wellons Village, and Hoover Rd. That's like we have most of them there. Is Morning Glory considered a-?

GC: Morning Glory is a part of Edgemont.

AR: [inaudible]. So then they started Partners Against Crime. Was that like 1995 or somewhere around there?

GC: Somewhere around that. '94, '95, somewhere around in that area. At that time I wasn't at the table. I didn't know of anyone that was a part of this program. But unbeknownst to me they were behind the scenes working some things to try to get the quality of life of the residents of Northeast Central Durham to have more of a quality of life here. Meaning in every aspect - education, economics, and crime as far as the reduction of crime. And they started out having meetings, from some of the information that I know, in East Durham Community Center, which is on Harvard Avenue. As a matter of fact, that's the community that I'm from. It's the Y.E. Smith Community. They began having meetings there, which later moved to Eastway. But the first office that they had was out at Antioch Baptist Church on Holloway Street. So that's when they really set up shop. And they were down there on Holloway Street I think for maybe two years, Two to three years. And then moved here to the Holloway Street School, which is now known as the Northeast Central Durham Community Service Center.

AR: And that's your official name, right Northeast Central Durham Community Service Center?

GC: Yes. Of this building.

AR: How did they manage to get into this facility? This had been closed?

GC: Yes. It had been closed down, condemned. Used to be the Holloway St. Elementary School. And they came in, the school system decided to open up an alternative school, if I'm not mistaken, an alternative school. They took up half of the building and Northeast Central Durham came in and rented the other half. Okay, so that's how that worked out with the city or school system, putting together.

AR: Did they get community support for this or did they get city funds or anything like that? Do you know?

GC: Yeah, the city. What happened was Carl Washington worked with the city in order to get Northeast Central Durham funds as far as to help this program get on its feet and begin to do the things that they wanted to do to better life here in Northeast Central Durham. So the city funds this program as of right now although we get other grants and other programs going. The city is the backbone so to speak of this program right now as far as funding. They pay the rent here. They give us the money to pay the rent. Other things like lights that needs to continue. So that's how we're funded.

AR: So then when did NECD actually get formed out of PAC?

GC: I'm really not sure. When I came on all of that was in place. I'm not sure if it was something that was from conception. But from the beginning it started as the PAC, Partners Against Crime, Northeast Central Durham PAC. Which is supposed to be a model program for other PAC's in Durham. So we're District One and we're supposed to be the model for the other four districts, the other three districts. There are four districts in Durham. So it's supposed to be the model program for Durham.

AR: Tell me a little bit - it sounds like you've sort of told me some of the goals about the organization already. Is there a formal mission statement or anything like that you can think of that you should tell me about? I might stop and check this sound. I'm a little concerned about this. I might have to adjust the mike a little bit. Okay. Let's give that a shot and see if that works.

GC: Okay.

AR: Let's see if the sounds is a little better on that. So are there any sort of formal mission statements or goals or things that we haven't talked about of NECD that we should know about?

GC: Basically, it is for the, we've talked about the majority or the gist of the mission statement. There is a formal mission statement. I don't have it in front of me right now so I don't want to misquote it. The mission statement basically states for the improvement of quality of life of residents of Northeast Central Durham. Meaning, like I said the social parts of quality of life. You want to talk about physical parts of quality of life. The way we live as far as the appearance of Northeast Central Durham: the streets, the landscaping, the whole nine yards. That's the mission of Northeast Central Durham. Whatever, it's substandard, we want to change to bring it up to speed.

AR: Makes sense. Can you talk a little about the types of projects that NECD does? The other kinds of services that you offer or provide

GC: Some of the services or programs that are provided here in Northeast Central Durham from the children, we work with, we have the Helping Parents Help Children program that works with children from zero to five if I'm not mistaken. And they try to get them ready for school. So that they won't be behind for children who are not able to go to a formal setting of day care or school. It's a daycare program. And they come in and they work with them on speech. Starting them on ABCs and numbers and even some reading. So that's one of the programs that we do here. Then you have the Family Preservation

program that works with elementary school students. We help them from tutorial sets, as far as getting them up to speed who are already in the system. Not only the children but we work with the parents, which explains the family preservation. It helps the whole family. Any need from, if a person needs some health issues to social services on down to job readiness. So those are some of the things that we try to target within that program. From my perspective, from Durham County, the Cooperative Extension service, we do a variety of things. We kind of encompass some of the things that are being done from Helping Parents Help Children and Family Preservation. And then we go a little bit further over to some of the adults and the senior citizens with transportation for people who need to go to doctor's appointments. People who may have started a new job who don't have transportation so we try to give them transportation up and to the time they are able to help themselves to get to work. Also, we have job fairs, job placement, job banks that we have in our office that people can come in and look at the job board and see if there is something that they can do, that they can get a job. The other things is that we on a more tangible way as far as people who need food. We have a food bank here that's on site. We also have a clothes closet. So we help in a variety of ways to provide services to the residents of Northeast Central Durham. We are also doing GED program-

AR: Wow a lot of services-

GC: Um hmm, we're working with students or residents from the age seventeen or sixteen on up to about seventy years old to get their GED. We have a literacy program that a fellow by the name of Ben Sherrod who is a former student of literacy, the Literacy Council who felt that he owed the community something because he was taught to read at an old age. So he started his own program.

AR: That's neat-

GC: He's doing some things here out of the center as well. And we also do tutorial for middle and high school students. So it's a lot of programs that we're doing here at Northeast Central Durham.

AR: The literacy council, was that the Durham Literacy Council?

GC: Yes.

AR: I think actually Katushka works there.

GC: Yeah.

AR: Great. Well, so everything from literacy and childcare to food banks, job fairs. I mean it sounds like almost sort of any community need in a way.

GC: Sure, sure. And I didn't want to leave out the Hispanic community. We work with the Hispanic population. We may not be doing as much as we should be. But we're trying to work toward getting to where we need to be as far as working with the Hispanic population.

AR: What kinds of areas do you see sort of expanding to in order to be able to service them.

GC: Well with Helping Parents Help Children we are doing the groups with the Hispanic children as far as teaching them so at an early age they can be exposed to English. And what every other child within this community, or any community, is being exposed to. So that they will be up to speed or on the same level when school starts for them. So that's the other thing that we're doing with the Hispanics. Also, we provide food and clothing to them as well. I've tried to work with some of the Spanish speaking employees here to try to target some of the Hispanic residents that they know of or we can find that need food or clothing. So we've tried to reach out in that way as well. Also, the PAC has been opened to the Hispanic population. We have translators that are at meetings from time to time that translate the meetings as they go on. So we're trying to get them involved in this initiative because we realize that they are in this community and a part of this community. So they cannot be really left out. How can you work to improve this community if you are leaving out a segment?

AR: Exactly, exactly. And it sounds like you are trying to deal with some of the language barriers-

GC: Sure yeah, that is the first piece that we want to do. Because we realize that they need to be able to understand us and we need to be able to understand them. An effort also, one of the things that we are working toward, it hasn't happened yet. We are working diligently to get this on site as a program is Spanish classes for the residents who want to be able to communicate with their neighbors. So that's one of the things that the community has expressed that they want to have. So we're working, the county is working to try and get somebody in here who can teach Spanish. As well as Katushka Olave is doing some English classes over here at the center for the Hispanic population so that they can have English as a Second Language so they can understand us. So we're working hard to try to bring the two communities together. Although Northeast Central Durham is one community, it's sort of divided in a way. Because if

there is a language barrier then there is a division because if we don't understand them then they don't understand us. So we're trying to break those walls down.

AR: To move past that. Are there white residents as well that you're servicing or are we talking primarily African American and Latino?

GC: There are some Caucasian residents here in Northeast Central Durham and we do work with them as well. As a matter of fact, we have a few that come to the PAC meetings and various separate organizations within this community. Because we still have separate neighborhood meetings like Neighborhood Watch. Like Y.E. Smith, we may have a separate meeting from the PAC and sometimes that's when we may see the variety of residents coming to those meetings.

AR: So we're not talking strictly black and Hispanic?

GC: No, no, no, no, no. Because we realize that we can't say that we can exclude anyone. We have to include everyone for this initiative to actually work. If you look at our history and look at our past, we've done that for too long. As far as trying to separate ourselves when we all live in the same city, the same neighborhood, the same street. We all have to come together.

AR: When we were talking before about people on staff who have Spanish language skills, roughly how many people to you have on staff? How large of an organization is this?

GC: When I talk about staff it's not just Northeast Central Durham staff. It's various agencies that work within Northeast Central Durham. Right now I'm only aware of about two or three people who speak Spanish that are fluent in Spanish. One in particular is Rogelio Valencia. We work with him sometimes we may overwork him to try to connect with the Hispanic community. But he is open and willing to work with us. And we thank God for Rogelio and Katushka. But definitely Rogelio because he really has a connection with the Hispanic population.

AR: Yeah. When you say various agencies, we're talking Durham city agencies?

GC: Yeah, Durham City, Durham County. All of the departments of Durham county is involved in Northeast Central Durham and has made it an effort to do programming and target this area. Durham City as well. Along with Duke Fast Track. Along with North Carolina Central University. North Carolina Central is doing some wonderful things here in Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Tell me both about Duke Fast Track and NC Central, what they're doing.

GC: They're, I can start with North Carolina Central. North Carolina Central is currently working with us on a program called the Peach Project. It's an acronym, I can't give it to you now. It's long. But it's actually about lead-based paint in houses in Northeast Central Durham. And what they're doing, it was a grant that was written first of all to go to some of the house in Northeast Central Durham. Target the houses in Northeast Central Durham to find out if there's lead-based paint in those houses. And if so, to treat those houses. And I don't know exactly how they treat those houses. What they've done is train some students, some teenagers here from Northeast Central Durham to do that kind of work. Not only that but they're doing a curriculum with them on life skills. Talking to them and mentoring. I can't remember how many guys are in it, but it's over ten guys in this program. My opinion is it's a wonderful program. It's getting some of our young black males off of the street. And what it's doing is actually giving them some goals and objectives in life to accomplish. And to let them know that there is something else other than hanging out on the street or getting in trouble. It's giving them some kind of a push toward the future.

AR: And so they're working with students out at NC Central or faculty or staff?

GC: Um hmm.

AR: Mentors in that sense?

GC: That are mentoring. We have a few people that may have been hired but we have volunteers as well. It's a wonderful program through NC Central. NC Central is also looking to do some other things here in Northeast Central Durham, as well. Duke Fast Track is the hosting agency for Family Preservation and for Helping Parents Help Children. So we've already talked about those two programs. So Duke is behind, is partnering with Northeast Central Durham on that initiatives with those two programs.

AR: That's great. And what types of things would Durham City and Durham County be providing?

GC: Durham City, as I said before, provides the funding to continue this program as far as the rent and other things like that. But they also do programming such as the festival that we will be doing. Durham City is directly involved in that program. They provide leadership, Durham City and Durham County provides somewhat leadership to Northeast Central Durham. As far as they partner with Northeast Central Durham - I don't want to say lead them because it's a partnership. Where we sit down at the table and we talk about what Northeast Central Durham needs and what can the county do to help us accomplish

what we want. What can Durham City do to accomplish? We start talking about housing. There are a lot of houses in Northeast Central Durham that are substandard and some that need to be condemned. So the residents, they look at those houses and they identify those houses and say okay. What we going to do, we're going to sit down with the city and give them these addresses. And what they'll do, and they'll go and either put pressure on the owners or condemn the houses so they'll be torn down. Also with crime, the city, we work with the city with identifying crime. It's more of a neighborhood type watch program where as residents we identify. We know what's going on on the streets better than the police do. So what we do, we'll say something's happening on Angier Avenue, "Can I speak to Officer Hester or Captain James?" And they come out and we've already identified the situation and they know how to come in and extinguish those fires so to speak. Durham County provides programs more of on a social basis, social services, the health department. Things like immunization for children who didn't get immunized earlier or by the time they should have been. And they'll do some special programs here maybe how to eat right, how to cook right. Just things that we need here in the community.

AR: You mentioned the city and this housing issue. How responsive has the city been in trying to get some of this stuff dealt with?

GC: I'm not sure about as a whole how responsive they've been to the issue of housing. Of course we know that we still have substandard housing here in Northeast Central Durham. Some processes take longer than others so I'm really not sure. In my opinion, I would like to see it move faster but I have seen some changes. Habitat has come in and put some new houses in this community. And in places where the city has gone and torn down old standing buildings that should've been condemned years ago. And so I have to applaud them for their efforts but I would like to see it move a little faster. But I don't know the process. So that's the key, the process may be long. I don't know.

AR: It's a hard one. Well, as I said, we may come back and look at that issue more majorly down the road if we have a chance to do that. So it sounds like y'all have really good support in lots of ways from some of these area institutions. How many people, let's come back a little bit to the neighborhood. How many people roughly would you say you serve? That's probably really hard to even estimate. But I'm just trying to get a sense for how wide the circle is.

GC: Northeast Central Durham is such a large place I mean as far as service and people we are targeting as far as to serve. It's a wide variety sometimes service goes unnoticed as far as small things sometimes. Like somebody may come in and want you to help them with a resume. And you just do it and you don't think about it. You just say thank you and that's just it. I would say, directly we service a lot of people. But indirectly, I believe we service everyone that lives in Northeast Central Durham. Whether it's cleaning up the street, getting rid of crime on a certain area. I don't know how many people live in Northeast Central Durham but we service a lot of people.

AR: Sounds like probably hundreds-

GC: Hundreds of thousands. I would think so. It may seem to be a lot but when you put together a cleanup campaign and within a month you clean up five neighborhoods. I mean let's think about how many houses are in each neighborhood. You have hundreds of houses in one neighborhood. If you do five within a month you know you have easy a couple of thousand. And that has happened where the city will come in and do special cleanups in various neighborhoods. And I think that's an improvement when you start talking about some of the things that sit on the street, cars that are junked and the owner won't move them. Or the owner just left it there. And the city comes and they'll move it.

AR: And that has an impact, sort of a ripple effect-

GC: Sure.

AR: Yeah definitely. What about, you talked before about servicing the Latino community. Maybe we could talk a little bit about how you have seen this neighborhood change. And what you think are some of the issues that are important in terms of the Latino population and the long time residents.

GC: As you know, I grew up in Northeast Central Durham right off of Holloway Street. Not Holloway, excuse me, Alston Avenue and Eva Street. And during that time, there were really no Latinos in this area. Within the past ten to fifteen years, and fifteen maybe too long. Maybe the last ten years we started to see a great increase in the Latino population. One of the things that I see is that they have, I don't know if whose fault it is, if it's a problem or not. But they have basically formed their own type of community in a way. Northeast Central Durham, they should be a part of everybody. And I understand how they did that because they, family or friends have like things in common but I see that there is a line, a demarcation between the community and the Hispanic community. Although we are trying to reach

beyond those lines, there is a line. For the Latino, and what causes them to become victims of crime of a lot of other things. You start talking about segregation, I mean, the same things that happen to black people before the sixties. I look at it and it may seem to be kind of extreme to say this maybe, but I can see that if we don't address these issues now, I can see maybe some of the same things happen to the Hispanic population that happened to the African Americans in times past.

AR: Are you talking about hate crimes and that sort of severe-?

GC: Sure sure, hate crimes. We've had issue where African Americans have victimized Latinos. They've never to me been, I've never had any problems with them. I live here. And they live two streets over from me but we don't communicate. But, I've heard also of Latinos being robbed because people really look at it and say, well you know, and from what I understand they don't trust the banking institutions that we have here. So they keep their monies in their pockets or their houses. So people who are criminal minded will take advantage of that. Then you start seeing that there could be some kind of racial problems going on. If they think that the African Americans are going to victimize them and then they may retaliate. That's some of the things that we could look at that could come in the future, if we don't address those issues now. I really wouldn't like to see that happen. I'd rather see them to come sit at the table and talk about some of the issues and let's break this wall down.

AR: What do you think is the best way to start to address those issues and break those walls down? I mean, what are the steps?

GC: You know, I really don't know. I really don't. I think that if we can pull a few of the, or how many want to come to the table. Latino residents of Northeast Central Durham, maybe not just of Northeast Central Durham. Maybe Latino residents of Durham County. Because I'm looking at the bigger picture. I mean we can do in Northeast Central Durham but it does not happening all over Durham then it is null and void in a way. But if we can sit at the table and bring our issues to the table, both Caucasian, Hispanic and African American, then I think that we can talk about the issues that are at hand. What do we need to do? How can we do it? And who's going to do it? It's incumbent upon the Hispanic population to come to the table. It's incumbent upon the African Americans to invite and the Caucasians to be there. If we can come together in that way, I think that's the first step. And then you start talking about communication. That's why we want to, we're trying to address this issue of communicating with our

neighbors. I'm pretty sure a lot of people don't understand the Latino community. The only way you're going to understand is go to where they're from. I've had a chance to go to Mexico. Now they may all not be from Mexico but I've had a chance to go to Mexico to see how they live. To see what struggles they have to go through. And in a way, I understand some of the struggles and why they separate themselves or make sure they take care of each other. Because they've probably been victimized enough in their own country. So when they come here they kind of stick together, whether they're family or just friends, they stick together.

AR: Were you able to make that trip while you were--

GC: Working here--

AR: Doing this kind of work?

GC: Yes ma'am.

AR: Oh that's great, wow!

GC: I spent a week in Nogales, Arizona. Actually it was Tucson but we spent a few days in Nogales, Arizona. And then went over to Nogales, Mexico and had a chance to look at the living conditions. And I think before that trip, I guess we've all, as far as residents or anybody, not just Northeast Central Durham has wondered why do they live like they do? It may seem that a whole family lives in one house. Well in Mexico they might not have a place to live. It's really, we talk about substandard living or substandard housing. In Nogales Mexico there is substandard, I mean really substandard housing there. And here, it's more of an opportunity for them.

AR: So it becomes an experience of relative to what they went through previously? What we think of as substandard.

GC: That's right.

AR: And that's not to say that it's okay to have substandard.

GC: Yeah and it's not to say that it's okay and we want to better whatever we have here. But from where they come from it's already better, in some instances. Not all, I don't want to make, paint a picture that it's just so bad but it is.

AR: It sounds like that must have really expanded your sensitivity to the issues.

GC: I think it has and I guess sometimes in the past I've may have gotten caught up in what my experiences have been. What I have been made privy to or been a part of. But when I've seen this I found out that there are some people who are more less fortunate than I am or I was. And for me to understand their plight from Mexico to Durham, North Carolina to Northeast Central Durham.

AR: The journey that it took for them to get here.

GC: Sure.

AR: Yeah I think it's really true. I think what's hard for people who can't make that trip how does one start to help sensitize or bring awareness to? I mean I don't know.

GC: Well-

AR: Have you had thoughts as you think about how you might expand your programs here?

GC: I think one thing we can do as a program is to educate not just our community but Durham as a whole or North Carolina. Or we can even talk about the nation. To educate them on what Hispanics or Latinos have gone through. And to let them know, it's not easy. One of the things we had to do as African Americans in order to be understood or, you know, let's just say understood, is that people had to know where we came from and what we've gone through. And until then you really couldn't say that that's no excuse for this and no excuse for that. But you don't know unless you've walked in a person's shoes. Or at least seen where they have been. So to educate the residents is my perspective. So I hadn't thought about that but that is an option to really educate the residents on what Hispanics had to go through to get here.

AR: It might even be something that we think about for this spring festival idea-

GC: Sure-

AR: We might think about what might be two different perspectives to bring to that little performance or something. I don't know, it's just a thought but as you were talking I just thought you know--

GC: Yeah I think that that could be a very nice piece within that. To talk about our neighbors to sort of recognize them for how they've made it. They probably have more to go through in a new place. I think right now they may be going through a bit of culture shock.

AR: I think that's really true.

GC: So something, and I think we should be helping them to adjust to this new environment.

AR: Well and when you think about it. Most immigrants usually don't get that acceptance, if you will, that sensitivity. I guess a part of me thinks if we can do it differently isn't it going to be better for everyone. It's just my take on that. It's good, it's really good. When you were talking about, I guess, coming back to this issue of Latinos and you were talking before about your experience previously. You made this trip but you said something in there that was about how you might have measured your experience against their own hardship. I can't remember, you didn't put it in quite those terms but can you elaborate a little bit on that?

GC: As far as-

AR: Well, maybe what we could do is back up a little bit and say what did it feel like for you when the neighborhood did start to change? The Latinos. Because now it sounds like your thinking has really evolved but sometimes there's a journey on that evolution.

GC: Sure. Well, I remember, let's just say Juniper Street. I remember it at a time when I was a school boy, hanging out on Juniper Street and everybody over there was African American. As a matter of fact, I dated a girl that lived on Ivy Street. I knew everybody over there. And the Juniper Square and all those places that were over there that were places that I would go and play. Well when I started seeing the Hispanics moving in I felt that they were invading on my turf, on my playground. The places where I would visit my friends. It was no longer our place. It wasn't that a few moved in. I felt like that they just took over and I had to find me another place to go. And I don't know what was running through my mind as far as. I think that was part of what was running through my mind. The church that I go to, Greater St. Paul, is in that community. I felt like that they were just overtaking my community. Not realizing that it was not just my community that it was anybody's who lived there and that we could share it. But that wasn't my mindset at that time.

AR: How old were you at that time?

GC: Early teenagers. Early to mid teenager. In that time, probably let's see I was in middle school so we could talk about maybe twelve on up to about fifteen, sixteen.

AR: So this would've been in like what year roughly?

GC: You're looking at starting in about '88, '89.

AR: Yeah, late eighties.

GC: '89. I was more of a teenager then like fifteen, sixteen years old during that time but that's when I started to see that the community was changing. And along in that time too crime was building. The community that I knew and loved and grew up in and was safe and felt safe in had already changed. So with the Hispanics moving in, that didn't help any. It really didn't. Not to me. I was feeling betrayed by some of the African American guys who were there victimizing African Americans.

AR: Jackie talked about that how there was black on black crime before. You just didn't hear about it.

GC: You just didn't hear about it much and but that was already going on when they came to the community. Versus in the mid to late seventies when I lived on Eva Street and actually it was my grandmother's house. I didn't actually live there, I lived on Owen Street in Northeast Central Durham. But my grandmother, we spent most of our time on Eva Street where we would sleep all night with windows up because there was a breeze in the summer time. And we didn't worry about being broken in on or someone coming in and doing something less than right to us. Now you wouldn't dare leave your windows up at night. You wouldn't dare do that. Especially in the late eighties, you wouldn't dare do that. So that's the difference from the late seventies to eighties. Now to late nineties.

AR: What kinds of changes did you see between late eighties to late nineties to now?

GC: Well you started seeing juvenile crime. You really started to see some real serious juvenile crime. You started to see drugs. Drugs really, drugs is probably always been there. But it was mostly with the adults. But now when you say something about late eighties to early nineties you started seeing young people, young teenagers, using and selling drugs.

AR: Yeah, big shift. Let me go ahead and flip this tape.

END OF TAPE I, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

AR: So you were saying you started to see not just crime but also drugs and then-

GC: You started seeing gangs arise, gang activity. Maybe not to the extent of California or LA style gangs like Crips or Bloods or anything. But you had gangs like the Few Crew, North Durham against East Durham which is all a part of Northeast Central Durham. But we were set up against each other depending on what side of town you were from. My parents didn't go for that. If they even thought that I was in a gang or affiliated myself with a gang, they put an end to that then.

AR: So the gang activity was getting pretty prominent by late eighties, early nineties?

GC: Sure. Yeah, yeah. And you started hearing senior citizens being victimized by young teenagers.

AR: Why do you think it shifted so dramatically in that time period? Do you have any sense?

GC: I'm really not sure. I don't know what happened. I started seeing people stop taking interest in their houses, interest in their yards. Used to be a time that although it was always the low-income area of Durham, people cared about their houses. Maybe most of the homeowners had started dying out. This community used to be, had a wealth of elderly people who were here when these houses were built. Now they're dying out. For instance, the Wilson ladies, Caucasian sisters, used to run a finance company downtown, lived right here on Spruce Street. They took care of their houses. And I remember because we used to rent from them years ago. But they required that we took care of our house. And they definitely took care of theirs. But if you look across the street here, on Spruce Street, you see that that house is not, it's substandard now. And they're dead and gone. So maybe some of the older people are dying out and it's more of a transitional place where renters come and they go.

AR: Has there been a shift between homeownership toward rentals?

GC: Sure. Yeah. And I think that was the kick toward crime coming in or lack of interest in this community. Because people were basically, maybe had the attitude of I won't be here long. Or maybe when they got tired they just left. Homeowners know that "I'm here for the long haul. And I'm going to make a difference in this community. And I'm going to make sure at least my house, or my neighborhood is intact." And when everybody gets that mentality again then Northeast Central Durham will change.

AR: I was really struck reading a little bit about Northeast Central Durham and some of the-that there actually had been people who had been able to buy their houses off of Golden Belt Manufacturing in that area. That there had been some homeownership there and I'm wondering how much of that has continued and how much that has shifted. Because it seems like if there's rental properties, it's harder for a neighborhood to stay secure. Do you know what happened? Is there still much homeownership in that area? Or is it turned over.

GC: Right over in the Golden Belt area?

AR: Yeah.

GC: You're talking about some of the older houses over there?

AR: Yeah I guess so some of the ones that were built--

GC: With the Golden Belt, when they came and offered housing--

AR: Yeah.

GC: to the employees.

AR: Yeah and then they got to buy them out. Which apparently didn't happen to the other mill in the area.

GC: What happened was. Yeah most of those houses were probably-and I don't want to say most-but I don't want to say that. A lot of those houses are rental properties. Either that or they're run down. Nobody's taken the time to keep them up.

AR: So either people died out and they turned into rental or-

GC: Yeah. Or when Golden Belt closed down the employees moved or eventually they said either I'll sell it or I'll rent it. And so that's what ended up happening and most of those houses are rental properties.

AR: Wow, wow. It seems tough. Are there efforts to try to find ways to finance some of the-like through the Self Help Credit Union or is there a way in which to try to get people opportunities to buy?

GC: Yeah. But there are a lot of financing opportunities for buying a house here in Northeast Central Durham and the houses are of course not as expensive as maybe Hope Valley or northern Durham. But like we were talking yesterday, at another program in Winston-Salem, when you clean up a place and when you change the appearance, the stigma is still there. People still think that although it looks nice, it's

still crime stricken. And I'm trying to get away from that. I don't want to buy a house in this area and have to worry about something happening to my children. And it may not be happening anymore but that bad taste that has already been placed in people's mouths is hard to get rid of. I think it's going to take some time of healing. The residents of Northeast Central Durham, as well as other people who are coming into the city. It's going to take some time of healing in order for this place to become a viable place to live and a safe place.

AR: In part you're saying because of people's perceptions of the place?

GC: Yeah because of the perception of Northeast Central Durham. It's not so much, and there is still crime here. I don't want to make it seem like there is not any crime here. But because of what has happened in the past, that's why crime exists. Nobody's going to come. All the banks of Northeast Central Durham but one has moved out. Okay.

AR: What does that do to the area?

GC: Well it changes the whole feeling of your area. If there is no banks and there is empty buildings, then it becomes a safe haven for crime, drug use, prostitution. There's nobody there to tell you you can't stand here. And no other businesses are going to move here, I mean no good businesses move here, until that perception has been dismantled.

AR: Yeah. What about economic development and revitalization and that kind of thing. Sort of like how do you, are people trying to get industries to move in? Cause it seems like when there was industry here then there's like industries connected to those industries and all of that?

GC: Yeah, we're trying, we're trying. And that's one of our missions. And in our mission statement to try to build this community economically to bring in more businesses and things of that nature. There is a push to try to bring more businesses here but you can't really twist anybody's arm to make them move here. We're getting a new mall in the southwest part of Durham, it's called Southpoint. I wish that they could've come to Northeast Central Durham. But they're not going to come because they feel that the perception is not conducive as far as them making money. Because it's not conducive for them making money here.

AR: So they have to--

GC: They're going to go where they think they money is. Where the people are going to spend money. And where there's not going to be any problems of crime. Although there would be maybe some problems but not maybe the overwhelming problems that they think is going on over here in Northeast.

AR: What are the kinds of changes that you've seen then since the early nineties to now, in the community as a whole and also with the growth of the Latino population? How would you kind of characterize that?

GC: As far as in conjunction with Northeast Central Durham?

AR: Yeah. Just a sense of--because you were talking before that late eighties and early nineties was when the crime had increased, there were gangs forming that kind of thing. How has, how have things changed or continued over this last--

GC: Well I think the drugs have continued. Early nineties drugs and crime was probably at its high in Northeast Central Durham. During that time, early nineties up to almost mid-nineties. But what had happened was residents and other community activists and City Council and maybe other police department, basically I feel, said enough is enough. Okay. It's time that, because you can't overlook a problem for so long. And I think that Northeast Central Durham went overlooked for a long time. Whether people want to admit it or not. If it had not been overlooked, it wouldn't have gotten to this point. Because I remember when houses were beautiful here. Not all of them but there were a few. And there still are some that are real nice here in Northeast. But you started seeing this effort of people trying to do some things and trying to push this gang related issue or initiative out. But at the same time you started seeing crime was really climbing. Young people were being shot and killed here in Northeast Central Durham. Drugs on a high. Unemployment at its high. Dropout rate for Northeast Central Durham at its high. The PAC was being formed. Okay. Because of this issue, crime and everything else that was going along here. And the Hispanics were moving in. Crime being done to them as far as being robbed, beaten, raped because they felt that they were being. And I'm sure that some of these people were feeling that they were less than residents or citizens here in Durham. Even employers, and I've heard horror stories how if you want to get some cheap labor you go get a Mexican. And you pay them and we all know that we should pay people what they are worth. But if you want to build a house, and I'm talking about people not from Northeast Central Durham. I'm talking about people, contractors coming in here paying Hispanics less than

what they could pay an African American because they knew that they could pay them less. Maybe because they were illegal immigrants or didn't know any better. So in turn what it was doing, it was cutting out the African American from doing the only job he could do. Because the Hispanics were going to do the job because they needed the money. Everybody needs the money. So you're going to cut out the person you know who knows what they should be getting paid and you're going to pay the Latino less and he's happy. So what else is there for an African American who has no skill other than what he's already been beaten out of. He has no skill, has no education. What else is he going to turn to in a community where drugs is running rampant and crime is too? He's going to turn to drugs. Whether he's going to use them or sell them. And he's adding to the crime rate.

AR: Right it becomes what opportunities are available.

GC: There you go.

AR: This comes up a lot in Brown Creek - the prison project.

GC: So that's what, I've heard people talk. I don't know for sure because I haven't been in a situation where I didn't have a place to go as far as work. But I know it happens. So you have the Latinos being victimized all around, crime-wise and job opportunity-wise. The African Americans are being overlooked because they are more knowledgeable of what they should be getting paid so you use the least cost labor as possible. All those things going on and crime is going up. But there's a few people trying to fight this crime issue. So that's where this Partners Against Crime comes in.

AR: It's interesting what you were saying about the issue of African Americans losing jobs to Latinos. Cause I've heard a lot of people talk about it but then the funny thing, because I was reading articles about the issues of Latinos coming in to the area. Some people, or some studies have claimed that that isn't, that there isn't as much job loss as we think there is. But then you could argue that as long as people perceive that's happening. Again it's one of those things. If people feel cut out-

GC: Then actually they are cut out-

AR: Yeah. Then there's a disconnect there.

GC: Sure. Sure.

AR: So that seems like a pretty loaded issue because then it comes back to opportunities that African Americans do or don't or historically haven't had. I would think there would be a lot of opportunity for resentment around that issue alone.

GC: And now you're doing the same thing to the Hispanic population that was done to the African Americans. Not only are the white Americans doing it but the African Americans are doing it. Okay it's a vicious cycle that should've been stopped when we were supposed to have stopped it with African Americans. You see but were doing it to other people. So that's what's happening or is happening in Northeast Central Durham. Not just Northeast but all of Durham. All of this nation I'm sure. I don't know about anybody else but I can estimate that it's happening all over. It had to come from somewhere. But now you see that from what I understand, there's a difference. There's a new thing that is happening. Hispanics or Latinos are not, I guess they've been victimized but maybe on a smaller scale. There are still a few that don't know. But I think it's incumbent upon, especially the African American community to help educate and inform the Latino community of what can happen. And the Caucasian community of what can happen and how to stop what's happening. That's why I said it's best that we sit at the table and find out exactly what's going on with all three races.

AR: You know it's interesting because I think in California people have been trying to work at building what they call sort of Black Brown alliances. Because some people have argued that what people need is not that different. I mean they may have come from different places but what they need are similar opportunities and good paying jobs. Just the whole nine yards. What do you think about the possibility for African Americans and Latinos here to start to see their common needs and goals?

GC: I think that is what we need to do. I really do but not only look at the common goals but let's look at some of the differences that we have. Everybody comes from a different cultural background. And we bring all kinds of experiences. And just because they're here, they're not going to leave their culture behind. So we have to understand and be able to adapt to each other's culture. So to me, yes, let's talk about what's in common. Yeah we all need jobs, we all need money so that we can live comfortable. But let's talk about some of the other things you may need. Let's talk about some of the other things that we may need. Should we be putting up a multi-cultural center in Northeast Central Durham? I'm sure we shouldn't be separate. I'm sure there should be something within this center that should be talking about the

Hispanic population on a constant basis not just for a certain month and the African American population as a whole. Who are some of your heroes? Who are some of your the people that you call some of your public figures? How do you feel about these issues here? There's a lot of questions that need to be answered to me.

AR: Yeah that's true.

GC: And I guess that I'm the kind of person because I've been there and seen certain things, I don't understand everything that I saw, but I would like to understand who they are.

AR: So it's like that education process.

GC: Sure. Let's educate each other in order to work together.

AR: It's a long process.

GC: Sure, sure, sure. And I think it will take years and years to get to the point where we want to be. I think if we can make the first step that does a lot and changes a lot when we can make that first step.

AR: Maybe we could circle back to, and I don't know how we're doing on time. We still have another twenty minutes or so. Circle back a little bit to how you ended up coming to work here at Northeast Central Durham. Sort of how you came into your current position here. Sort of a little bit of your story that it matters to you to do this kind of work.

GC: Okay. Well--

AR: You were born here in Durham?

GC: Sure. Yeah.

AR: And what year was that?

GC: '73.

AR: '73. Okay.

GC: 1973. Living in Northeast Central Durham, born in Northeast Central Durham, and knowing a lot of things about it, I had not heard of anything of the PAC before when they first started knowing anything about them, let's just say that. But I was working with the Durham Public School system as a Teacher's Assistant and a good friend of mine named Michael Page was in my current position now. And we are both ministers at the same church and one day and I always talked to him about working in the community, and knowing him I found out what Northeast Central Durham was about. What the PAC was

about. Their mission, their goals. And coming from this community and remembering how parts of Northeast Central Durham used to be, and still being a resident of Northeast Central Durham, I felt a responsibility of wanting to become a part of this program. And I asked him about any job opportunities within this program and he was constantly looking for me. And while I was working with the school system it was a job, matter of fact, Jackie and I were working together in the same position as Parent Involvement Specialists at that time with the Family Preservation Project through Duke University in Northeast Central Durham. He told me about the position so I applied for it. And I got it and I came over and I started working in the community. My job was to facilitate or co-facilitate parent groups with the parents and students of Eastway Elementary School. So I started that, that was how I first got my feet wet within Northeast Central Durham working with and getting a chance to meet people like Callina Smith, Jackie Wagstaff, Marlynda Bodism, William Thomas. I already knew Willard Perry who was one of the people who had founded Partners Against Crime. We were members of the same church. As a matter of fact, his daughter and myself grew up together on Eva Street and we played. And she's younger than I am but I know her. Didn't have a chance to meet Carl Washington but I had heard a lot of good things about him. So knowing the community and getting a chance to meet new faces or people I hadn't met before, I began to get more involved within the program. The program that I was working with lost part funding and so I had to move on to another job. And it just so happens that another job within Northeast Central Durham was opened. Actually it was with Durham County. Durham County in the Department of North Carolina Cooperative Extension had a program assistant position open to do programming or to facilitate a leadership curriculum with Northeast Central Durham youth. Which would be middle and high school students. What I began to do, I was talking with Michael Page. He was still running the center and I set up a program here and at Edgemont and I did one at Fayetteville Street, which was right outside of Northeast Central Durham. But I branched out to Fayetteville Street and went out to Rochelle Manor which is out Holloway Street and was doing groups with the youth over there. The program was called Leadership Rap. It keyed in on kid's leadership skills and would teach them if they didn't already have those skills, how to become a leader. And how to exert yourself in ways other than being too aggressive either like physically or negative aggressiveness and to channel those strengths to a more positive, in a more positive way. So as I was doing that, six or seven months had gone by and my good friend Michael Page went to work for the

church, Greater St. Paul which is still in Northeast Central Durham. He went full-time and the opportunity, and I was a full-time student at Southeastern Theological Seminary in Wake Forest and I had the opportunity to take Michael Page's position here as the coordinator of the community center. And I took the position and I accepted. And I came in and tried to put some programming in place I guess from the perspective that I was looking from as more of an educational way with children. Mostly I work with the youth about trying to get them ready and excited about college. So I work with them with SATs. As far as within my tutorial program, I'm pushing new words, reading levels for the SAT program, for the SAT test. So that they can get into an institution that they want to go to. The other thing is too when I was coming up in Northeast Central Durham, I had probably one of the highest SAT scores within this area.

AR: You were one of those good test-takers. Right and a good test-taker.

GC: Right. Well I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that-

AR: That's good-

GC: Standard tests like that's probably been a problem for me too. But I was fortunate to get into a program at Duke University, Upward Bound. Different programs, I can't remember the name of the program at Duke, another program, but it was a tutorial program where some of the basketball players like Christian Laettner, Brian Davis, Antonio Lang would come over and help tutor some us and other students from Duke University. So it helped me with my SATs. Although I didn't score exceptionally well, I did score on a higher level than the majority of the students here in Durham. So I wouldn't say Northeast Central Durham, just in Durham in general. So I want to impart the things that I've learned, that helped me along the way, with some other child, some other teenager in Northeast Central Durham so they can go on and do great things.

AR: Do the mentoring-

GC: Sure.

AR: That's great. So it sounds like the tutorial program is one of your little babies.

GC: Yeah, it's one of my babies. What we do, when I started, we did a college day where I invited all of the HBCUs, Historically Black Universities and Colleges. They came and talked to the kids about college and what it takes to get there and what they should be doing now. And we will continue to do that this year with this college day. So yeah, that is my baby. That is my baby. And I think everybody

knows that is my little baby so I'm trying to nurture it so when I do leave, and I know there is going to come a day when I have to leave this place that it will continue.

AR: And you've been with the organization for how long now?

GC: Northeast Central Durham?

AR: Yeah.

GC: Approximately two years, about two years.

AR: Great and are you the liaison to the county?

GC: Yes, I am the county liaison-

AR: As well as the director of the center too?

GC: Yeah. Because the community center, the county, they wanted the county to do the administrative, sort of like the directors position of this thing. So yeah.

AR: So like when you were saying before about the numbers of staff on board, they're not all necessarily on board with NECD. There's a couple, are there a couple of NECD positions and then county positions?

GC: No, actually NECD doesn't really have any positions.

AR: Doesn't really have positions. Wow, wow.

GC: And so all of, everybody that works here, works for another organization, Duke University, North Carolina Central, Durham County, Durham City. So that's how that works out. Although I think in the future there is a push toward getting some NECD employees.

AR: Too bad you can't get a little support from Christian Laettner. He's going to be redoing some of those old mill areas-

GC: Yeah, yeah I've heard about that-

AR: If he's going to be investing back in Durham. Boy.

GC: Yeah. Maybe he should come up with some dollars in Northeast Central Durham.

AR: How about that?

GC: Maybe he'll read this or hear this interview-

AR: Right. [Laugh]

GC: and come back and give some money. [Laugh]

AR: Did you hear that [inaudible]. But it's exciting to see people investing in the city, in efforts here. So it'll be pretty amazing. So it sounds like then there's, how many people actually then contribute in a staff capacity. Are we talking like a half a dozen people that work through NECD through these various different institutions or agencies?

GC: Well your looking at, let's see, you're looking at about ten to twelve.

AR: Wow that's great.

GC: Ten to twelve employees.

AR: And then like do you have volunteers as well?

GC: Yeah, I have volunteers especially with my tutorial program. North Carolina Central, and I'm saying North Carolina Central is really doing an awesome thing here. I went to North Carolina, as a matter of fact, I am a student of North Carolina Central. And they are really working with us through their community service program and through the Political Science Department as well. And I'm going to be doing some new things with Dr. Hall, he is the chair of Political Science program and Dr. Aicher with the Political Science program at North Carolina Central. And they're going to bring in a formal SAT prep class for Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Wow, so you're really serious about-

GC: So I'm really serious about this-

AR: This baby's growing.

GC: Yeah.

AR: That's great. That's really great. I was going to ask about um, oh yeah. Just a little bit about, you've talked about, you mentioned you were at school at Wake Forest at the Theological Seminary through there as well as NC Central. Can you talk a little about your coming of age. You've talked about you grew up on Austin Street and Eva Street.

GC: Eva.

AR: Yeah Eva Street.

GC: I guess my roots are all over Northeast because we've moved from all different parts of Northeast Central Durham. From Chester Street which is a street from over here. From Owen Street in

East Durham and Eva and Austin. And at one point in time we lived on Angier. So my roots are all over Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Yeah. Now had your family grown up here too?

GC: No actually-

AR: A lot of history here?

GC: My dad is from Creedmoor and my mother is from Wake County which that part used to be Granville County. They moved here my dad was a young adult probably in his early twenties when he moved here. So but yeah he did spend a lot of time from his young early twenties all the way up to now in Northeast Central Durham. So yeah it's been a lot, it's been a long time for him too. And a lot of people here in Northeast Central Durham know him and my grandmother-

AR: What's his name?

GC: George Crews, Sr. Actually he's junior. I'm the third.

AR: You're the third. Great. And what kinds of work did your folks do in the area?

GC: My father is a retired sanitation worker for the city of Durham.

AR: So he was a city employee.

GC: A city employee. He got hurt on the job and retired early on disability rather. My mother works at Duke Hospital. Before then she was working downtown at a little clothing shop called the Wee Shop, right downtown on Main Street.

AR: So it sounds like you grew up in a pretty, pretty stable, pretty secure situation?

GC: Yeah I have to say that. But we have lived, and it has not always been. Although they've worked, there has been rough times and we lived in some rough areas. Like Chester Street probably has some nice houses on it but it's probably not one of the most safest places to live. Owen Street was nice when we were there. But now it's stricken with drugs and prostitution and stuff like that. Eva Street now is, oh man, it's changed so much that I wouldn't get out of my car and walk through that street now. But we've been stable to the point where our family has stayed together and gone through tough times and rough times and come these issues of, I'm not going to say crime, but some of the things that have happened as far as to us and this community. Like I've been broken in on and even jumped on from time to time.

AR: Yeah and you went to schools here in the neighborhood?

GC: Yeah. I went to Y.E. Smith in Elementary. I went to Holton Middle School, which is on Driver Street. And from Holton I went to Durham High School, which is no longer in existence anymore. They closed it down maybe four or five years after I graduated. Right on Duke Street.

AR: And then you went on to. Did you go on to NCCU?

GC: Yeah I went to North Carolina Central University.

AR: Yeah, and then-

GC: And then Southeastern Theological Seminary.

AR: Seminary. So what did you study in school? It sounds like theology was where you landed. Did you start in theology?

GC: No, no, no, no. Actually, I started as a Business Administration major, which changed to Criminal Justice [laugh]-

AR: Oh really, so you moved into Criminal Justice?

GC: and Criminal Justice.

AR: Interesting. We should pick your brain this project I've been working on at Anson. Wow. It sounds like you've had a pretty broad based education.

GC: Yeah so now I'm back at North Carolina Central in Political Science with a concentration in Public Administration.

AR: Wow great.

GC: I'm still working on my undergraduate degree. But what I want to do is use the knowledge that I have obtained from North Carolina Central and use it to work in this community. Or whatever community that I end up in that I can be able to use it wherever I go.

AR: Yeah I just maybe we could almost kind of close with this. I've got a little more tape here. We've got a few more minutes. Tell me a little bit about why this works matters to you. Because obviously you've got a lot of background. You've got a lot of education. There's lots of things you could be doing, lots of positions that you could have taken. Why did you want this position?

GC: Well because for one I remember how the community used to be. I know how it can be. And I know what I went through as a young teenager, young adult in this community. And I know some of

the things that I've gone through, I don't want to see others go through it. Because most people, a lot of my friends I went through this stuff with, didn't make it. Some are dead. Some are in jail. So I want to try and help the ones who are behind to get past what's going on. And to eventually maybe, if enough people make it out that will definitely change what is happening in this community. If they can all come back and say, "Somebody helped me. I'll help you." And then after a while, you don't have to worry about a lot of the stuff that is going on. The other thing is too, and I have to bring in this thing of, my calling, my ministry. It is incumbent upon me as a minister of the Gospel, especially in this community, to help people. One of the commissions that Jesus Christ had left for the disciples and for everybody that comes afterward, and we're disciples as well, is that we're here for service not to be served. So what better way to serve people. I think we have the misconception that we serve people from pulpits. No. You have to get out in the street to help people. The people that are in your church most of the time don't need your help. Jesus said, "I came for the sick not for the people who are well." You see. So that's one of the things we have, it's incumbent upon the ministers, the churches, anybody who say they are called by any God, be it Allah, Buddha, Jesus to get out and serve.

AR: So you really believe in a hands-on ministry it sounds like?

GC: Sure.

AR: Yeah. And you had mentioned the church that you, what denomination?

GC: It's a Baptist, Missionary Baptist Church.

AR: So you continue to be active in the ministry it sounds like-

GC: Sure.

AR: As you're active in the community?

GC: In the community. And it goes hand in hand. One of these days, I hope to pastor.-

AR: Yeah. Great.

GC: So maybe somebody can look back and read this stuff or hear this stuff and say "Hmmm, he pastored." [laugh]

AR: [laugh]. That's great.

GC: But I want to pastor and use some of the same concepts.

AR: Think about what you've learned here and what that will inform your pastoring. I think that's fabulous.

GC: That's right. And I'm such a young minister, I'm only twenty-five years old. So some of the things I'm doing now can help me in the future and push me along, push me a little further in the future than maybe somebody who hasn't had this hands-on experience.

AR: I'm trying to think of if there's anything we haven't covered here. And the one thing I realize, we touched on race relations in the African American and the Latino communities you were coming up. What about race relations when you were growing up with the white community when you were growing up in Northeast Central Durham?

GC: Well it's to me although, and I hate to be this way but I have to be honest with myself, there has always been racial tension, racial lines in Durham and still is. And I can't say it will always be but it is. I grew up going to this city, we had two school systems. One was called the city school system and the county school system. And supposedly, and it was all the majority of African American students came to the city schools. And the majority of the Caucasian students went to the county schools. They had more money in their budget. But they had new books. All of our books were old books that they used. Okay. So they had the new information and we had information that they had previously. So in other words, we were always a step behind so to speak. But they were supposed to have merged to bring both school systems together so there would be no difference. But what happened was, yeah the school systems merged, but then came the public schools versus magnet schools. The majority of magnet school students are white students and they are getting a specialized education in middle and high school while we're still doing general things. And I think that that's a product of the racial issues that goes on here in Durham. To me it's a racial issue that Northeast Central Durham has not moved as fast as it should have moved as far as substandard housing, as far as the crime rate. Why is it that things can happen here that wouldn't dare happen in Hope Valley or by South Square? So I see a lot of things. I don't know how we are going to address these issues. Definitely we have to address them in a manner that doesn't spark too much. But there are sometimes that some things just have to blow up in flames before some things change. But there are still some race issues so that's why I say that with the Hispanics, we have to bring them to the table before they get caught in this vicious cycle. Because we will be victimized or oppressed by white citizens -

not all but some. Then we in turn we oppress and allow the Latinos to be oppressed by us and by white residents of this community. So I think that that's going to be an issue in years to come.

AR: And some of what they're saying out in California, at least some of the stuff that I've looked at, is African Americans and Hispanics have a similar, not to say that African Americans haven't oppressed Latinos, but there has been a larger oppressor for both communities. And that there's a way in which people can address that for both communities and it can be a place of common awareness. It's very, it's loaded stuff. And when you said before about how a part of you could understand Latino, or felt you could understand the Latino experience because of being there. And I was wondering if that was referring to specific incidences or just an overall experience of being put into as you were talking about a substandard education, or not having the same opportunities.

GC: It could be, I can understand the total picture. Although I will probably never, just like white people will never probably totally understand an African American's issues. African Americans will probably never understand, we may identify with some, but never totally understand the issues that Latinos face here in Durham. We can sit and talk and we can sit and chat and we can do surveys. We can do all, you know focus groups. We can do anything we want to do but until it's you, you don't know.

AR: That's really true.

GC: You will never know. So I want to try and find out but my main objective and goal is to try and, whatever they need, just listen to it and find out how can we fix it. How can we get on the road to where this is not an issue anymore.

AR: To at least-

GC: Yeah. At least reduce some of the issues. There's just some things that will probably never be totally vindicated or corrected-

AR: Yeah I think it's like one of the challenges that's just facing us in the millenium is living in a multi-cultural world.

GC: Sure, sure.

AR: How do we do that in a way that honors difference but also recognizes that some differences, as you're saying, you can't completely get past but how can you build bridges with the commonalties that do exist. I guess.

GC: One of the things that you were talking about with the racial issues that's going on here in Durham as well as Northeast Central Durham is, and I was just thinking and wondering a class that I was taking and it talked about the melting pot concept versus the salad bowl.

AR: That's great. I love it because my grandmother used to always talk about the melting pot thing [laugh].

GC: [laugh] Right now Durham is more of a salad bowl than a melting pot and we need to be able to fuse some of these things together and it brings a unique flavor.

AR: My grandmother used to say that it's a melting pot but nobody turned on the flame [laugh].

GC: [laugh] That's right. So we need some flame.

AR: Maybe some flame is good.

GC: Yeah we need some flame. We need some flame.

AR: We're pretty much at the end of the tape here. Is there anything we've left out that's critical that we should touch on? Or do you think we've kind of covered?

GC: I think we've-

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B