START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

JACQUELINE WAGSTAFF
DECEMBER 1, 1998

ALICIA ROUVEROL: This is Alicia Rouverol of the Southern Oral History Program. I am here with Jackie Wagstaff at her home in Durham, North Carolina. We'll be talking today about her experiences working in the Latino community here in Durham. And this is part of our New Immigrants Project coordinated by Jill Hemming and myself as part of the Z. Smith Reynolds Listening for a Change project. Today's date is December first 1998. And this is my tape number 12198jw.1.

Okay, great. So let's go ahead and start with more about your background: when and where you were born, if you don't mind going on tape with your date.

JACKIE WAGSTAFF: Oh, no.

AR: Okay. A little bit about your background growing up in Caswell County. Oh, and the other thing is I'll be taking a couple of notes. I have to make sure I get names spelled right and that kind of stuff. So I'll be jotting that down as we go.

JW: Get it right now.

AR: I'll try, man. See that's why I work with these tape recorders because that way it picks up everything.

JW: You can pick up everything you need to pick up right.

AR: ( ) photo.

JW: No. I'm going to show you when they were still putting Negro on birth certificates.

AR: Oh really?

JW: Look at that birth certificate.

AR: It says New Rochelle. I have a relative that lives in New Rochelle.

JW: But at the time I was born they was still doing that.

AR: Wow.

JW: Instead of Afro-American.

AR: Right.

JW: I mean.

AR: Ruby Wagstaff, that was your mom.

JW: Right.

AR: Ruby Wagstaff.

JW: Yeah. That was my mom.

AR: Jacqueline Denise Wagstaff. So I guess you were born in Westchester, New York.

JW: Um-hmm, in New Rochelle.

AR: New Rochelle. Isn't New Rochelle a pretty wealthy community?

JW: I mean it's pretty upscale.

AR: Yeah. It's pretty upscale.

JW: It's pretty upscale because I have--. Most of my aunts and uncles and cousins still live in New Rochelle. So most of my family—most of my family is in New Rochelle, and D. C. and Maryland. I don't have--. I have an uncle and an aunt that lives—one lives in Sedalia and one lives still in Caswell County. That's it.

AR: Wow. Yeah. I'm going to stop quickly and check this to make—

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

AR: I think that's looking a lot better. I've got the gain up here so we'll get a little better pick up. So—and the date here is—

JW: Nineteen fifty-eight.

AR: Nineteen—ten one?

JW: Hmm?

AR: October one?

JW: No, December the eighth.

AR: Hello.

JW: I have a birthday coming up.

AR: There we go. December the eighth, oh yeah. It's next Tuesday.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Great. So you have family in D. C.—

JW: And Maryland.

AR: Maryland.

JW: And New Rochelle and the Bronx, so—

AR: So where is the connection to North Carolina?

JW: Well, my uncle.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Being raised in North Carolina after my mother died. That's the connection to North Carolina. Being in Caswell County, like I said, grew up in a rural area. And kind of went to school in a rural area, did rural things. And just kind of, you know--. That's where my roots are. That's where I consider my roots are in North Carolina, you know. That's my birthplace but my roots are in North Carolina.

AR: Um-hmm. Because you came here at what age?

JW: I was four going on five. And, you know, my brother--. I had two brothers. And, actually, my youngest brother was already here. And my oldest brother, he and I, remained in New York until, you know, Uncle Martin decided it'd be best if we were raised in the country. So that's how we ended up here. So—

AR: And your mom died when you were four? Is that right?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Never really got to know her. I just kind of hear things and, you know, pictures and stuff like that. I never really got to know her. So that's probably a part of me that I guess my drive to help other people and relate to their families because of that fact, you know. Sometimes you miss that part.

I guess not having--. It's not the same, you know, being raised by somebody else. It's okay. But it's not the same. Because my aunt and uncle, they were real strict. It was very structured and very strict. So, you know, I'm not going to say it was the best environment but we didn't go without. It just, kind of, one of those--. They never had kids of their own. So we were their kids. But at the same time that's another difference. Unless you have kids, I think there's something missing.

AR: So it's more of an adjustment probably to become a parent in that way.

JW: Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. I think it's more of an adjustment. When you have your own kids it's not so much of an adjustment. It's just, you know, here. This is my extended family.

But to actually take on someone else's kids and you don't have any kids and never had experience with any kids. It's kind of like, okay. I'm given a family and I have to adjust to it. So it was kind of like that. But it was okay.

AR: And were your siblings--. You said you had two brothers with you there.

JW: Yeah. I had two brothers. I have an older brother and a younger brother. And my older brother--. Actually when my mother died my youngest brother was only about six months old. So he actually, you know--. He actually spent all of his life with my aunt and uncle because they got him from the time that he was six months old. And we actually spent--. When my mother died we actually spent like another year or two in New Rochelle before, you know, we actually transitioned here.

AR: Right.

JW: You know, it worked out. I'm not saying--. It just wasn't the same as being raised by your parents, your real parents.

AR: Right. And you had spent four years with her so you had some kind of connection.

JW: And I still have vague memories, you know. You have some. But it's not like--. And my older brother, he has better memories of, you know, stuff like that. So, you know, we kind of all went out--. My brother, my youngest brother, now a police officer here in Durham.

AR: Really.

JW: Actually, this is his patrol. So—

AR: Really? What are all their names? What are your siblings' names?

JW: My oldest brother is Michael Wagstaff. And my younger brother's Chris Wagstaff, Christopher.

AR: Right. And then your mom was Ruby. Is that right?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: It's a beautiful name. Yeah. What about growing up with you aunt and uncle there in Caswell County. Can you talk a little bit about what it was like growing up on the farm there? You said they owned the land. Is that their land?

JW: Most definitely. We still have--. The land was passed down from my grandfather. And it's about a hundred acres. And when my mother died--. Actually her share was passed down to my brother and myself. So, you know, we have her land. And basically we just kind of farmed the land because all of my aunts and uncles never—they never made a life in North Carolina.

After they grew up and came of age they left North Carolina most of them, migrated to New York. That's how they ended up in New York. They just left, you know. They decided they didn't want to be farmers. So all of my aunts and uncles left and moved away. And my one uncle he stayed and he farmed the land. He kept the land, you know, paid taxes on it and everything. So that's why the land stays, you know, in the family. And then we brought--. You know, he bought other land. As we grew up it was like he bought other farms and other land. So we have a lot of land in Caswell County.

AR: That's great. Did y'all manage to keep the hundred acres in tact?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Boy that's great.

JW: Kept it in tact. And, you know, it was like I said structured, very structured because they was like strict. And they had certain beliefs. And that's why a lot of times a lot of my belief plays into what I do, you know. Like I say, you know, growing up a certain way it wasn't like growing up in the city. It was just certain things that I believe in and certain things that I do. And, you know, it was hard. It was hard work. I'm not going to say it wasn't hard work. Because you had to do things like you had to get up before daybreak, milk a cow, feed pigs, do whatever you had to do. And that was before you went to school.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You know, and still went to school, you know. You get on a bus and you ride about an hour or two because the nearest school was in Yanceyville. So we had to ride for about an hour or two to get to school. So it was kind of non-traditional but at the same time you had value. And that's some of the values that I grew up with.

AR: What did--. Well I guess a couple of different questions. When you say it was--. It sounds like it was structured in terms of work. Was it structured also in terms of religious belief, you know, was your family pretty religious or—

JW: They were traditional Baptists, very traditional Baptists. And they believed that we had to believe the same thing that they believed. Now I'm traditional Baptist. I believe I'm very spiritual. But I would never impose on my children what they imposed on us when it came to religion.

I gave my children the opportunity to decide what they want to believe, you know. I provide the core but they basically make the decision on what they want to believe, you know. I'm not going to push it down their throat. But at the same time,

there are things like, I believe that, you know, hey, Sunday morning I went to get up and go to Sunday school, you know. I don't care where you go.

But right now we attend First Baptist, which is a white church. But it's Baptist, you know. It's not traditional in the sense of what I grew up with. But it's traditional in the sense of what I want to be involved with now.

AR: So when you talk about traditional Baptists that you grew up with, how would you define that. And then how's that different from what you've chosen.

JW: Traditional Baptists--. What I grew up with would be basically your basic small congregational church. You had traditional people. You had people that were in charge of certain things. Everything was structured. You have your minister that did this. You had your congregation, your deacons, your sisters and all of this that did certain things in the church.

And, you know, my uncle was one of those important people in the church. He managed the finances. He managed the books. He was one of those people that were very important, key to the church and, you know, we had to follow suit because he did hold that position in church.

AR: So there's a lot of sort of public visibility as a result—

JW: Sort of.

AR: Of what y'all had to do to—

JW: Always. I had to do certain things that I really didn't want to do sometimes. But had to do them because they said that's what you had to do.

AR: Like—

JW: Like go represent the church when you had to go to big conferences, you know. We had to go--. We had these things called associations.

AR: Right.

JW: Where all of the different churches come together and you had to have representation. You had people that when they call your church name, somebody had to get up and do something to represent the church. And I always got stuck with it.

AR: I thought that was pretty good training though, don't you think?

JW: But it used to--. I used to get--. I'd be so nervous, I mean, I just was not going to do it. And I just hated it. And I was always pushed into doing it, you know, things like ushering in church on Sunday, you had to be the person. You know all of these were things that we had to--. We had no choice in the matter. So we had to do it. So, you know, like I said it was traditional but it was very structured and it was expected of us. You know that's basically how I grew up in it.

You know as far as the church that I've chosen here, it's basically somewhat in that tradition. But not where anything is forced on you, you know. I--. The reason why I think that I chose this church is because this church actually does things in the community that I want to see get done. And they've reached out to the community, which they didn't have to. We're talking about a church of over five thousand members that don't have to come out in Northeast Central Durham and do anything if they didn't want to. But have reached out to the community.

AR: Now what's the congregation make up. You said it's a white Baptist church.

JW: That's what it is.

AR: Are y'all the only African Americans?

JW: Probably one of—

AR: Really?

JW: Probably one of probably about twenty.

AR: Really? Huh. What's that like?

JW: I like it. I--. Basically I have no problems with it. I enjoy it, you know. The congregation, the people there, you know, I feel like they're very open and honest and, you know. I just feel comfortable. I don't have a problem with it. And my kids thoroughly enjoy it, you know. So that's basically how I got involved. When, you know, I saw this church going around in the community picking up kids to introduce them to things that were going on in the church I said, "Hmm. That's interesting."

And I had actually--. I've gone to all of the churches, visited, trying to find a church that I could associate myself with, Afro-American church. I couldn't find it. It just wasn't there. I'd go to church and I just wouldn't feel like that's where I wanted to be. So, you know—

AR: So it sounds like part of the draw was that—what they were doing in the community worked for you. Yeah.

JW: It worked for me.

AR: Yeah. Interesting.

JW: It kind of drew me in. And, you know, you had Mr. Brown that kind of kept tugging at me saying, "Can you help me do this and do that." And then, finally, you know, I just kind of hooked up with him.

AR: Yeah, yeah, great.

JW: He was the draw. He twisted my arm.

AR: Yeah. So that sounds like one real important thread of your growing up. What about--? Tell me a little more about the farm. What did y'all farm?

JW: We raised tobacco. We raised corn, wheat. Anything that you can name, we raised it. We never really had to purchase anything. The only thing that we had to actually purchase for our household was sugar. Everything else we raised. We raised wheat. We'd take the wheat to market and we had flour. We raised corn. We'd take the corn to market and—

AR: I wonder--. Yeah. How much of the marketing y'all did? Did y'all do that yourselves?

JW: We did all the marketing. We raised tobacco. We would take our crop in. We'd take our crop in at the end of the year. We'd take it to market, sell it and we made money. So we made money. I--. It wasn't nothing for me to have a thousand dollars in my pocket to go school shopping.

AR: That's amazing.

JW: And I'm talking about a kid that was about ten or eleven years old.

AR: Wow.

JW: You know, that was easy money.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You know, it was hard work, but the payoff. There was a payoff, you know. You'd work on the--. You'd work on this crop for about two or three months and then when the payoff—that was the ultimate payoff, what you brought in.

AR: That must have been really gratifying to see your work really produce like that. I mean I used to know so many people who grew up in farm families where there wasn't any money.

JW: Well I—

AR: You know what I'm saying. So there was hard work but--. And there was lots that was good about the life. But that—

JW: Yeah. But there was no money involved.

AR: But nobody ever made any money.

JW: We made money.

AR: That's amazing.

JW: That was the good part. We had times that--. I think one time we made money and we went—we were going to school shop, my brothers, myself and my aunt. And we stopped and bought a car. We had that much money on us. We all pooled our funds, bought a car, continued to go shopping, came back, picked the car up on the way back home and went home with a car.

AR: Yeah.

JW: I mean, that was the type money we were handling, you know. We had that type crop.

AR: So y'all were pretty solidly middle class. You owned land, you know, buying a car on the drop of a hat, you know. A farm family that's making a good living.

JW: Yeah. I think we were. I think—in the sense that other people that we probably were, probably were. Like I said it was hard work. A lot of people wouldn't have dealt with it because it was hard work. And it was hard work, you know.

Most people wouldn't want to get up at five o'clock in the morning and go milk a cow before they go to school, you know, stuff like that. They couldn't see that. Or, you know, we had tobacco. So we raised tobacco. And if we had to move some tobacco from one place to the other, we would have to get up in the morning before we go to school and move that tobacco. And then go home and get ready for school.

AR: And so, what about like the break down on who did those kinds of chores or work? Was that all of the kids? Did the boys do more than the girls or everybody was in it together or what?

JW: Not--. Well, the way we look at it, my baby brother seemed to get out of most of the work. [Laughter]

AR: I'm the youngest. I know that story.

JW: Okay. Well he seemed for some reason--. And it may be because--. I think my perspective is the fact that they had him from the time he was six months. That was almost like saying this is your child. You had him, whereas when we came to them we were already established. That's what I would say. We were already established, you know, we were ready for school, you know. No diapers, none of that stuff. So, you know, we were there, and it just seemed like he never got the blunt end of most of the work. He seemed somehow to get out of it. And we always, you know, had to do double the work to take up his slack.

So, you know, like I said, it was hard work. And most of the time it wasn't no different from between you were a boy or a girl you had to do the work if it was given to you. If you were told to do it you did it regardless.

The only thing that my aunt believed in—now I had an aunt that believed in strict things. Males do this and girls do this, you know. She had certain things like housework. That was the role of a female. That was not the role of a male. The outside work belongs to the boys, the inside work belongs to the girls. And she had that belief. That may be why my brother can't boil an egg now. [Laughter] Because he just—he didn't have to do that stuff, you know. They never had to do that.

AR: So did you get a lot of those household chores and stuff.

JW: All the time. Even down to picking up their dirty laundry. I mean, none of that--. They were just--. That wasn't their thing. They didn't have to do that. They didn't have to make beds. They didn't have to pick up dirty laundry. They didn't have to do nothing like that because that was--. She had defined roles.

AR: Yeah. And would that be just you and her that was doing that work.

JW: No I had--. My aunt had a cousin that--. She was kind of--. I say she was--. I would say kind of mentally handicapped kind of. But not to the point where that was—

AR: Not severely but, yeah, yeah.

JW: To a--. I would say if she was in school now she probably would be labeled LD or something like that, teachable. And she kind of took her in and raised her. So she kind of grew up with her. But she was older than us. But she kind of grew up with us. And she was there and--. Actually my uncle actually raised his baby sister because when his mother died his baby sister was a baby.

AR: Wow. So how many people in the household total then?

JW: Total was my aunt, my uncle, my three brothers--. And there was six of us in the household.

AR: So you had a good number of folks to work. Tell me again your aunt and uncle names.

JW: Bedford Wagstaff and Lucy Wagstaff.

AR: Lucy.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Okay. So you had sounds like a half a dozen folks there that were all—

JW: Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So it was always, you know, it was somebody in the house. And then my aunt, she worked. That was one thing else that--. She worked. She had a job outside of the farm. My uncle had a job outside of the farm. He was a sheriff.

AR: Are you serious? I was going to ask if they were prominent in the community beyond church. And it sounds like they were.

JW: They worked. They had jobs outside of the farm. Even though we had the farm he worked. He was a deputy sheriff in Yanceyville for years, a number of years. He recently just retired. It hadn't been but a couple of years since he retired. But he was doing that. And she worked on the job—she worked for people in Burlington. And she had prominent people that she would go and work in their homes all week long.

AR: Wow. So was she doing like household stuff there? Yeah. Housekeeping stuff.

JW: She had--. I don't know if you know Sellars Department Store in Burlington.

AR: I think I've heard the name.

JW: She worked for the lady that owned those stores.

AR: Wow.

JW: Until that lady died. The first lady--. The first family that she worked with--. I don't know if you know about the Moores. They're a very prominent family in Burlington, very prominent, a lot of money. And she worked for them for years until his first wife died. She raised their kids and everything. And when his first wife died he married again and I don't think her and the second wife got along too well. So that's when she moved over to working for the other lady.

AR: So she went to the other prominent family in town?

JW: Yeah.

AR: She had high tastes. Wow. So they were really pretty established all the way around. Yeah. Yeah. Huh. How were race relations in Caswell County when you were growing up? He was the sheriff. It sounds like he was in a pretty prominent role for an African American at that time.

JW: He was, but the race relationships in Caswell County I--. Right now until this day they're still kind of stagnant. They're like, you know, you still basically—you have—it's right down the middle, black and white. I mean you still have people that think that, you know--. You still have black people that still sharecrop, you know. And you still have white people that still own the land, and, you know, have the people

working for them. And I don't think that's ever going to change. That's going to continue to be because it's such a small town, you know.

But I guess where I lived at--. I lived on a road that didn't have but one white person that lived on it. And, you know, he was--. His wife now—point blank, his wife was a racist. But he wasn't. His wife didn't want to deal with nobody on that road. But he did. He just loved us to death. He, you know--. We actually did a—raised a crop of tobacco together one year. And he just—he was cool. He enjoyed everybody, you know. He helped anybody that he could help. And his wife just couldn't stand it.

AR: Wow.

JW: It was just one of those things.

AR: Wonder what kind of impact that had on y'all growing up. I mean because it seems like you're pretty comfortable in a white community if you're going to church at First Baptist. I mean, you know, did you have a sense of your own consciousness about race difference at that point. I mean, you clearly knew the difference between how he was acting versus his wife.

JW: Right. It's just that--. I think I understood what it was about because when we were in school--. Going to school we had--. I came--. When I started school in Caswell County I came in right at the beginning of integration. Now that was a hard one.

I remember a time that there was a parent that got upset because her daughter and I were friends. And that's when we first start integrating schools. And she was very upset because she didn't feel like her daughter needed to have any black friends. And we went through that. And I know how it felt. So, you know, it's like in a way--. It didn't

affect me in the sense where it made me hostile. But at the same time I understand where my boundaries are. I know my boundaries.

And then I look at it like this, you know, people fear what they don't understand. And, you know, people live a certain way most of their lives. And then all of a sudden here's this big change. Okay. Black kids got to go to school with white kids. And we're talking about a rural area. Ride the bus with white—whites and blacks had to ride the bus together.

We had--. It had gotten so bad that the white kids, their parents either would buy them cars so they could drive to school and wouldn't have to ride the bus with them or they would take them to school. The only white kids that rode the bus with us were the kids who were unfortunate enough not to have the resources. Those were--. And that was very few, very few that ever rode the bus with us.

AR: So poor whites in the area basically.

JW: Yeah, basically that's what it was. And there's was very few that would ride with us. We never had to ride with any white kids most of the time because they—the parents just didn't want them. So we went through that whole change.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So, you know, I've seen it from both ends.

AR: Wow. How was the actual process of integration? What was--? Do you remember anything at school, any incidents ( )?

JW: I remember incidents where parents would get upset with other parents because they was like--. If we would have activities that go on at school and you had to have both sets of kids involved in it, I've seen parents that would, you know, things that

you just recognized. They would get upset and they would come to school. And they would fuss with the principal. And parents would argue with each other. And we'd have field days--. You'd have parents if they saw their kids playing with too many black kids they would say something. Stuff like that. It was going on.

AR: Wow.

JW: Right in our face.

AR: Wow. And did that persist throughout or did it shift at a certain point?

JW: It got better. I think it got better after I started middle school. It got better. It wasn't too obvious then. Not just in your face.

AR: Yeah. So what age were you when integration happened again? You were--?

JW: Integration started when I started in first grade.

AR: Yeah. So, you know what? That's about the same time that it started for me. Yeah. Maybe second--. I think that's right ( ).

JW: The first grade that's when I first got hit with integration.

AR: So you didn't have much time then like in a historically black school, right, in a black school in the community.

JW: Not--. Well that was a historically black school, the school that I started out in. But at the time that I came in they were just getting ready to open the doors and just open it to everybody.

AR: So it had been black first. Interesting.

JW: Uh-huh. And then they opened the doors and said, "Okay. We can't have this anymore." So went through the integration period.

AR: So really then was most of your schooling in mixed schools as a result at that point?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah. So what happened after your schooling? Did you stay in Caswell County throughout your high school years?

JW: Well basically when we got to about--. When I got to my last year of high school my aunt and uncle decided they wanted to get a divorce. So that was like, "Here we go again." So then my aunt decided, okay, we're going to get a divorce. I'm moving to Burlington. Because that's where she—she worked for those people. All her connections were in Burlington, you know. So we moved to Burlington for a year. And I did my last year of high school at Walter Williams in Burlington.

AR: Boy that's a big year to make a change.

JW: I know and I hated it, too. I had--. I was rebelling for the first--. I think for the first two days of school I rebelled. I said, "I'm not going. I'm dropping out. I'm not going because you took me away from my friends. I don't want to go to school."

I sat at home for about two days. And I had nobody to entertain me. I went to school. This is not fun at all, you know. You're at home and everybody else is in school. So, you know, it wasn't no fun being at home by yourself. So I got up and I said, "Well I'm going to school." But that was--. It just devastated me. I had to leave all of my friends that I had went to school with for years, from day one.

AR: That's right.

JW: Leave all of my friends and then, you know, I said, well, I couldn't do anything about that. So, you know, went through that period.

AR: And Burlington, you would have been moving to the city.

JW: Uh-huh. And that's what we did. We moved smack in the heart of the city, right in the heart. So, you know, it was like a big transition and getting used to new people, which was good because, you know, once I got into it it was all right with me. And once I got into it I met new people and new kids. And then it gave me a broader base of people because coming from a rural area, coming from Caswell County, where you just were focused on the people that you grew up around, people you'd seen all your life. And then I went to Burlington and then that's when I first met my first Taiwan person—person from Taiwan. And then starting meeting different people. So then it started, you know, it was like, "Oh, this is pretty cool now." You know, and the school that I--. Walter Williams was a predominantly white school.

AR: Interesting.

JW: Because Cummings was the black school. That's the school I actually wanted to go to but I was in the wrong district. So I couldn't go to Cummings so I ended up at Walter Williams. And I rebelled against that. I was like, "I can't go here. That's not the school I need to be at" because all my friends went to Cummings. So then once I got to Walter Williams I enjoyed it. It was okay. I didn't have a problem with it. It turned out to be the best school I ever went to, you know. After I got into it and just said, "Forget it. I was just going to not have these hang ups anymore."

AR: What was it that worked about it for you?

JW: I don't know it--. It wasn't as bad as I thought. I guess that's what worked for me. It wasn't as bad as--. And then I was a senior so it couldn't have been but so bad because I was a senior. I had all the privileges, you know. You could leave

campus for lunch and all that stuff. So being a senior might have helped. I got through that period and then moved on to something else.

AR: Yeah. Where'd you go from there?

JW: After that then my aunt decided she wanted to move back to—she wanted to move back to Caswell County. So we moved back to Caswell County. After she got divorced she just couldn't take it being in the city, wanted to go back to the country. So she moved right back to Caswell County. So, you know--. But the farm still was there. The farm wasn't going anywhere. But just kind of did that little year transition.

So when we moved back I was like, "Now what am I going to do? I'm graduated. What do I want to do?" Tried Guilford Tech for a while. I said, "No, that's not going to get it." And I was missing something, you know. It was that spirit. I was missing something. So I needed an adventure spirit. I've always been adventurous. So I had to venture out. And I decided I was going to leave.

So then I took my--. When I, you know, when I graduated mostly everything I got was cash. All of my gifts and stuff was cash. I didn't want no gifts, just give me cash. That's what I want. So I took the money and got me a bus ticket.

AR: Where'd you go to?

JW: I left. I got a bus ticket and I started out in Baltimore, Maryland. I got a bus ticket to Baltimore, Maryland, stayed in Baltimore for a year.

AR: Now you had family in Baltimore. Did you spend some time with them up there?

JW: Um-hmm. Went to Baltimore, stayed there for a year, and Baltimore was just not the place for me. It didn't appeal to me.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So I left Baltimore and I went to New Jersey, stayed in New Jersey about, almost a year. I have a brother out there. I have a half-brother that lives in New Jersey. So, I'm saying, "Well, this might do." And something about New Jersey didn't get it. So then about a year later I went to New York. I said, "Well let me go back home to my real home." So when I got to New York I thoroughly enjoyed that for a while.

AR: Now did you go to the city or did you go to New Rochelle?

JW: New Rochelle. I went back to New Rochelle, just kind of did my thing and went to—got a job.

AR: Yeah? What were you doing?

JW: Worked with a veterinarian in Larchmont. So, lived in New Rochelle, worked in Larchmont. So I had this little Jewish veterinarian. And he actually wanted me to go to school. He was going to pay for me to go to school. That was my first love, veterinarian medicine. I really said that was what I was going to do when I graduated from high school.

AR: Is that your first sort of real job outside of the farm? Or had you picked up work kind of along the way in other places as you were traveling?

JW: A little bit. But that was after my first real actual concrete job that I actually stuck with. [Laughs] So, you know, I said that was my real job because it was doing something I loved. And I love animals. So it was actually doing something that I loved to do or deal with. So I worked with animals. And I said, "Well this is what I like," you know. It was kicking in and nobody but me, you know. I could handle that.

So kind of messed around in New York for a little while. I guess--. And then when I got--. I think when I turned twenty-eight, twenty-seven on my way to twenty-eight, I was like, "I need to do something different now." Something--. You know, it was like you always--. Something that you need to do--. And I said, "Well I can't do it here because the city's just not the place for me." And I said, "I need to go back home." And I really had no plans of ever coming back to North Carolina.

AR: Huh. Now what—

JW: In my plans that's the way my plans were. But something kept saying, "Nah, you need to go back."

AR: What about this opportunity with the vet? Did you decide not to pursue that?

JW: I just, you know--. It was okay. And I said, "Well I can do that in North Carolina. I can go back to North Carolina and do that." And actually, when I left I was on vacation. I didn't intend to stay here in North Carolina. I left--.

My brother, my younger brother was graduating from high school. And I hadn't been home in like three or four years. And I said, "Well, I'm going to come home to his graduation." You know, I had always called. I would come as far as Virginia and call and say, "I'm on my way," and never make it to North Carolina. I'd turn around and go back—turn around and go back. And so I called and said I'm coming.

I came home, stayed a while, you know, hung out with my friends, my cousins and stuff. And then I said, "Well, yeah, I'm not going back to New York." And that's how I met my husband. I met him in Roxboro. I was minding my own business just

jogging down the highway, you know, getting some exercise. And he just came riding by.

AR: Just like that.

JW: Just like that, just came riding by. And I guess the rest is history. [Laughter]

AR: Somehow between the car and you there must have been contact somewhere.

JW: We've been together ever since. Then, I said, you know, "Well--." And I called my job. And the strangest thing, I called my job and told them I missed my bus but I'd be on the next one, right. Never caught that bus.

AR: And this was the job that was the vet job?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: No kidding.

JW: Never caught that bus. I was on vacation, wasn't planning on staying in North Carolina. I had no plans on it. I said, "Well I'll come stay a while and go back." And ended up spending the rest of my time here.

AR: Funny. Wow. I guess that's love for you, huh, or something.

JW: I guess that's what it is.

AR: Yeah.

JW: I guess that's love. I just kind of made my way on the Durham.

AR: So then did y'all come down here? Did he live with his family up in Roxboro?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: And what was his name? What's his name?

JW: Born and raised. Dexter Hughes.

AR: Dexter Hughes.

JW: Born and bred in Roxboro. And then, you know how you tell yourself it's time for you to do something else with your lifetime, for you to settle down. But I didn't want to settle down with anybody from the city. I said, "Nah. I'm going to get me a country man." [Laughter] A man from the country.

AR: Now would Roxboro count as a city?

JW: In a sense, but it's country, too.

AR: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Yeah, it's city in the sense if you live in ( ). But to me it's still country. So, you know, I just said, well I need a man from the country. I don't need a man from the city. I don't want to even go that route. I'd probably be divorced three or four times. So I went through that and just kind of trickled on my way to Durham, ended up in Durham.

I said, "Well—." When I was in Roxboro I said, "Well there's no job opportunities in Roxboro." There really wasn't. There wasn't any job opportunities. And, basically, when I was in Roxboro I was driving over here to work because I started out working at Darrel's out of Roxboro before it was The Greenery and all that stuff. So I was actually driving over here everyday.

So I said, "Well, I was driving over here—I was over here every day--." And, actually, I was over here most of the night because I had friends over here at Durham. So I was just spending ( ). I said, "Well I need to move to Durham. There's no need of me

staying in Roxboro and trying to be over here." So that's how I ended up in Durham. And really didn't have--. I have one cousin that lives here.

AR: So you really didn't have a lot of family here?

JW: No. I didn't have any family here other than my cousin.

AR: Now did your husband have any family down here or were they mostly in Roxboro?

JW: All in Roxboro.

AR: Yeah. So you guys really kind of struck out for—

JW: Well I moved here first because he was in service. He was in the Army. So I was like, "Well, I'm going to go ahead and move to Durham."

AR: See you in Durham. [Laughter]

JW: Yeah. So when he got out he came to Durham. So, you know, it was like, "Well, I'll go ahead and get started in Durham." And that's how I ended up here.

AR: So what'd you do when you—once you—you know, to get started here? What happened?

JW: Not much of anything, kind of worked odd different jobs like Darrel's. And I worked at The Greenery over by Duke. And worked at--. First I was hotel hopping. I was like doing the hotels. I was doing the Brownstone, the Sheraton. I was bail person. I told them, "Don't ever call me a bail man." I was a bail person. [Laughter] And I met a lot of people through that.

AR: I'll bet.

JW: I met a lot because a lot of people come in here on that rice diet. Had a lot of friends, a lot of friends, when I was at the Brownstone, I met so many people. I met

this one guy. And, he's dead now but I met him. His name was Mr. Clement. And he had a lot of money. He was from Texas. And he actually came to Durham to be on that rice diet so he could have this hernia operation.

And he met this girl that had an advertising agency. This man was almost eighty years old, never been married. All he ever did was a businessman, made money, never been married. And he met this girl named Jane that had an advertising agency. And she was like thirty-eight, and he married her. [Laughter] So Jane sold the advertising agency and invited me to the wedding. I went to the wedding and everything. I've met a lot of interesting people through the hotel.

AR: Yeah, it's interesting because even--. You were talking about that high school you went to in Burlington and just being exposed to new and different people. It seems like you've always been pretty open to new experiences and meeting people.

JW: I like meeting people. That's one of my pet peeves just to meet different people all the time. And I never meet a stranger. I try not to. Never meet a stranger. Treat you like I've known you all my life. But I've just kind of met with a lot of people at the hotel. I had people that'd come in and they'd kind of come in and be on a diet for about six months. And they'd leave. Always looking for me when they come back to town. I mean, a lot of people, a lot that way. And then I got into, you know, when I got into that thing and I started just kind of moving around. Did the hotel thing. And then I said, "Well the hotel thing wasn't getting it." I ended up--. I think I ended up at The Greenery. It started out as a nursing home but then it turned into a rehabilitation center. And I went from The Greenery to Carolina Re-Entry.

AR: What's Carolina Re-Entry?

JW: It's a head injury program on Morehead. That was the head injury program.

AR: And was that like some kind of nurse assistant related stuff or no?

JW: I don't know what my position was called. But I kind of did a little bit of everything. It was like I came in under transportation, you know, kind of taking clients back and forth to doctors' appointments and rehab.

AR: Sort of social service type stuff.

JW: Yeah. Taking them to different appointments. And then, you know, it just kind of escalated to a whole bunch of other stuff, you know. And just did that for a while; met a lot of interesting people that way. A lot of people coming in, that had different head injuries from different parts of the state, country and whatever. I met people that way, met their families, kind of got used to them. People still call me, they still call ma and write me now.

AR: You've got a pretty wide network, Jackie.

JW: That was--. It's networking. That's what I'm about. I've got clients now—I've got clients now that if they see me, you know, I still have to keep in touch with them to see how they're doing.

I actually have one client that I worked for for about a year after I left The Greenery—after I left the Carolina I worked for him about a year. He stays in Cary. He was—he was—he had an aneurysm. But before he had his aneurysm made--. He was the CEO of one of the major corporations, finance companies in the state. And, you know, he had an aneurysm. And he told me one day, he said, "If I'd known then what I know

now I would have stopped working so hard and I'd have slowed down and took life a little bit easier."

AR: No kidding.

JW: You know, so I worked for him for about a year. And I still stay in contact with him. He lives in Cary. I keep up with him, see how he's doing, you know.

AR: So you worked for him at his company.

JW: Uh-huh. I worked for him at his house.

AR: At his house.

JW: Yeah. I went—they paid me to come to his house. He wanted me that bad. That's my due meister.

AR: So what were you doing?

JW: Just anything—

AR: ( )

JW: He was partial paralyzed. He had paralysis on one side so I kind of helped him out and gave his wife a break, you know. When I'd come in I'd tell her to just leave. I've got him. You go do what you what to do. We'd go out, and eat and take him out. Take him out riding and do stuff with him.

And I had a client up in Chapel Hill, another client. He was actually the head pathologist over at UNC—what is it? He was the pathologist. He was the head person over at the morgue. Well not the morgue, but at UNC autopsies—where they do the autopsies. Yeah. And he had an aneurysm, too. And I ended up--. And his wife, ( ), just gave him to me.

AR: That's a lot of sort of home health care related stuff it sounds like.

JW: Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So I ended up with him and that was another one of my patients. See once they'd leave there I did such a good job, they'd be like, "Well come work for me." I'm like, "Okay, no problem."

AR: Word or mouth, it's everything.

JW: So that, like I said, network of people that you can always go back to.

AR: Well how did you end up getting from that work to like now. I know of you as Campaign for Better Housing, you know, Northeast Central Neighborhood Association.

JW: Let's see. My son—I had—my son I had him in 1986. And about that time, you know, you have to take a second look at life. Once you have children it's totally different. You understand ( ). What are we going to do now? When you don't have children you can just do that kind of stuff. You can network or do anything else you want to do. But once you got kids--.

And then once my son was old enough to be in school especially when my oldest one did his first year in school that's when I realized. And I was still working at the head injury program. And I was like, "Well I need to be accessible to my kids." That's the one thing I said, I'm going to be accessible. I don't need a job bogging me down where I have to if I need to be somewhere for my child I have to get permission from the job, you know. And a lot of jobs don't like you taking off all the time. And I said, "Now what can I do?" So that's when I started volunteering in the school. Well, actually, I quit my job and started doing catering at home.

AR: So now between the home health care stuff, what year was that you were doing that? Were you already having kids at that point or no?

JW: No.

AR: No. So--. Because you said '86 was the year that—

JW: My son was born.

AR: That your son was born.

JW: I started home health care before then.

AR: So—

JW: And it just worked it's way over and I was still doing it. When my son turned five that's when--. I was still doing the home health care stuff because I had a great in-home daycare lady. She was like--. She was my ( ). She's dead now, too. [Motorcycle heard in distance, comes closer making subject difficult to understand.] But she ( ) raised my kids. That's one thing that I wouldn't say that I had the best child care. I never had to put my kids in daycare. And I had this person that I don't care what time I had to be at work [motorcycle]. If I had to be at work at four o'clock in the morning she'd spend the night at my house. It was--. I mean I didn't have a problem. I never had a problem with childcare.

AR: That's great.

JW: That was one thing I was blessed with. I had somebody that was reliable. Didn't have to worry about, "Well, the childcare is not going to show up today or something." It was all in-home. It was all in-home. So I didn't have to take them out of their environment.

AR: Boy, you know, that's really a boon. I'm going to go ahead and switch this over. My sister managed to have someone who took care of her kids in the house for her and it was like really ( ) in the world.

JW: That's—

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

AR: So, you were talking about having health care, or childcare at home so you were able to keep working because you were doing the home health care service.

JW: Yeah. And I was doing the at home. And then when my son actually started school, the first day of school, I took him to school. And I was like in school. And I said--. Oh, you know how that first day is taking your child to school. That's a bummer. And I had my other son. And they're only like twenty-three months apart. So they're close in age, but you know, almost two years apart.

But when I was taking him to school, the other one, I was taking him to school with me. He'd go right along with me. And that's how he got an early start on things. So, you know, fortunate enough to have a good kindergarten teacher. And, you know, got him in school for a day. And I felt worse than he did leaving. So then I thought, "Now, what. I need to do something that gives me a ( ) to be on the spot."

AR: Right.

JW: So then I said, "Well--." I thought about it. And I said, "What can I do? I've got to come up with something that I can do that allows me to be accessible." So I started catering from home.

AR: Wow.

JW: Starting doing lunches for the teacher. I started out taking lunches to school to the teachers because I looked at the market. I said teachers can't leave and go get lunch. But a lot of times they get tired of cafeteria food.

AR: That's a great idea.

JW: So there's a market for it. All you have to do is be a person that delivered. I said, "Hey." I said, "All I have to--." I said, "All I have to do is get a menu together and offer it to them each week." So my girlfriend and I--. I said, "I've got this idea." And she was willing to go in with me. I said, "I'll put together menus."

So my first rough draft menu I put together and took it up to the school. And I said, "I've got some lunches if anybody's interested." First I took--. The first lunches for the first week I took free just to expose them to people and let people know what they'd be missing. So once I started doing that then, you know, I got this call from people that wanted the lunches.

And I started bringing lunches, you know. And I was selling, doing pretty good, you know. Then other people started calling up. I had clients at the Lincoln Center, clients at Blue Cross/Blue Shield, clients at Belton Dickinson. I had clients, basically, all over Durham. I was taking lunches. And my catch was that I would deliver. I would bring it to you. All you had to do was call it in before twelve o'clock and I'd have it ready.

AR: Wow.

JW: I had a menu, a weekly menu. And it went on for a while and, you know, then my girlfriend moved to Michigan. So that left me on my own. And I tried to do it for a while. But it was hard preparing and delivering.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So I said, "Well--." I couldn't find another reliable person. You have to have a reliable partner when you're doing stuff like that. So then I said, "Well, I'm going to have to give that a break." And I still have people now want to know when I'm going to get started again. They still want those lunches. I was good at it.

AR: How long did you do that for?

JW: I did that for about a year.

AR: Wow.

JW: Yeah. I was really good at it. And she decided she wanted to go to Michigan. And she goes to Michigan and leaves me. By that time, you know, I've got all of these--. I'm still networking. It's called networking. And everything that I do involves some networking. Meanwhile I've still got all these people that I've networked with by bringing them lunches. Went from lunches to just being at school everyday volunteering.

AR: And was this the school where your kids were at?

JW: I started at Fayetteville Street.

AR: Fayetteville Street's a cool school. I've been in there.

JW: Yeah, started at Fayetteville Street volunteering, was in there volunteering every day. If I didn't walk through the doors, the kids didn't. So, you know, I was there. Anything, you know, started Fayetteville Street. Then I moved—I moved on this side of town. I moved from that side of town where Fayetteville Street in that district to this side of town. So then that's when I started Holloway Street School.

So, same thing at the Holloway Street School. I said, "Well, need to do something over here." And I started volunteering at Holloway Street. And ended up being on the PTA. Got involved on the PTA, became PTA president. And the next thing I know somebody was offering me a job at Holloway Street School.

So then I started doing after school programs. Started working with continuing ed., worked in the after school program. Then, I'm still networking. So I work at outside the after school programs and doing things, seasonal sports for parks and rec. And just worked my way right on through. And then that's--.

At the time there were two schools: Holloway Street and East End. So then I got assigned to East End as site coordinator. And that's how I started networking at East End and kind of networking the community because when you do after school programs you've got to know the community.

AR: You get to know everybody.

JW: People come and get their kids. And if you do a good job, you know, hey, people want you. And I started doing summer camps. I worked with summer camps. And, you know, the older my kids got it got more involved, more intense. See, my—what I do basically I base it on how it reflects on my kids. That's how I do what I do.

AR: How you make decisions or--?

JW: I make decisions based on my kids. I look at it like this, you know, what I want my children to grow up in an environment like some of these areas. I said, "No." I said, "What do I need to do to help change that situation?" And that's what I do. I just base it that way.

AR: Well it sounds like you really threw your hat towards education, that whole area. Yeah. Was that pretty big for you for them?

JW: Yeah because I believe that education is going to be the only key to, you know--. I look at these kids and a lot of the kids that I--. You know I--. From working in the environment of East End and Holloway I've learned that, you know, education is a strong point for a lot of the families. And for a lot of the kids they, you know, it's not something they feel like they need.

I'm talking about generations of people that just feel like education is the last thing they want to be bothered with. They're dropouts. Their mothers were dropouts. Their grandparents were dropouts. And, you know, it just--. And it's continuing down.

And I've asked kids--. I ask kids, "What are you going to be?" I actually question kids about what they plan on being when they grow up. And they don't have a clue.

The first time a little girl told me that she was going to work at the Red Roof Inn. Her mother was going to get her a job at the Red Roof Inn. I knew then—I said, "Now something needs to be done to change the way of thinking." You know, you got kids that think that, you know, working at the Red Roof--. I'm not saying it's not a reputable job. But at the same time, you know, set your sights higher. Your goals have to be high, you know. You can't say, "Well, if I work at the Red Roof Inn I'm doing---." You know, that's, that's major work for me. And that's--. But most of the kids, if you ask any of those kids, that go to these neighboring schools, their goals are not high. And you need people out there that encourage them—even if their family don't—to have goals.

I tell my kids in my house I don't accept Bs. Even though they—even though most people say, "Well you don't accept a B?" I said, "No. If I accept a B then they're going to come in with a C." [Laughter] If I accept a C the next thing's going to be a D. If I set the sights high then that means that you'll be on the A honor roll most of the time if I set them high. So I set most of the goals high.

AR: Now how was goal setting done in your family when you were coming up? How important was education and get the As and the Bs and all that stuff?

JW: That's the thing. Education--. Now one thing mom and them told me, they said, "If you don't do nothing else in life graduate from high school." See when I grew up graduating from high school was a major step. If you graduate from high school you've accomplished, you know. They--. College wasn't a real biggie, but high school was, high school was a must. You had to do that.

And they believed that when you go to school you do your best. And I'm not going to have that foolishness. They didn't want no reports coming home. I know one time I got a report card and I had a bad grade on there. I think I had a bad grade. I almost died. I tried to change the grade. [Laughs] I couldn't take that home. I was like, "Oh, lord, they're going to kill me when I get home." I couldn't take them home. I was trying to figure out how to change it. I'm like the rest of the kids. I went thought that, you know. It was important. They just, you know, refuse when you come in there. And you didn't get in trouble at school. That's ( ). You went to school and you respected everybody at that school. You did not get in trouble.

AR: So then you had pretty high standards for your own kids coming out of that.

JW: Uh-huh. Real high. That's ( ) tell me, "You didn't never make a D in your life in school?" "No. I didn't." Because they always tell me here, "You act like you—you never made this or you never made--?" "No. I didn't." So we go through that. But I feel like if you lower your standards then, you know, you're not going to accomplish anything, not to me. You're not going to accomplish your goals, the goals that you set up. And I'm not going to lower my standards regardless, you know. They'll get upset but they'll appreciate it when they get eighteen when they have that full academic scholarship at Duke, full athletic scholarship at UNC. They'll appreciate it. So we have goals. So I just kind of push them. I know they don't like it sometimes but hey.

AR: Yeah. And how old are they now your kids?

JW: I have one that's eleven and one that'll be thirteen January the seventeenth. So they're moving right along.

AR: Yeah. And their names are?

JW: Alphonso and Don. That's Don right there in the green and that's Alphonso right there.

AR: Wow. So at this point then you're working in the schools. You've been working at East End—Holloway Street and East End—

JW: And I was transferred from both.

AR: So you're working in the school system pretty much.

JW: I was working doing after school programs and summer camps and then I started subbing. Because I was in the school and I knew the kids. And the teachers kept saying, "Well will you watch my class?" I said, "Well if I'm going to watch your class I might as well get paid for it."

AR: You bet.

JW: So then I started subbing. So then there became a high demand for me because they know, give me your roughest classes. I pride myself on going into your roughest classes. I don't like easy classes. I like the ones where they say the kids are out of control. Those are the classes I like to deal with. So I like going.

So I ended up going and it was high demand because you can't find subs anymore. People don't want to go into it. They'll tell you, "I'm not going to that school. I'm not going to that class." So you've got a lot of classes that don't have teachers a lot of times. So went through that. And that's how I got kind of wrapped up in that whole educational thing. And then just kind of doing things in my--.

And how I got so--. I'll tell you my driving force that got me involved in community stuff was Carl Washington. And he's deceased now. But he was actually second in charge of Durham Parks and Rec. I don't know if you ever heard of him.

AR: The name sounds familiar but I don't know.

JW: Well he was a strong advocate for Northeast Central Durham. He actually was one of the founders of Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Now you're meaning the association, the Northeast Central Durham Association.

JW: Northeast Central Durham.

AR: When did that association start? When did he found that?

JW: It was founded in 1994.

AR: ( ) now.

JW: And basically he just knew what the need was in the community. He, you know--. As you know, Northeast Central Durham and this whole area has been deemed the most socially deprived. They done studies and they decided that most of the crime is coming from this area. Everything is in this area. So, you know, a lot of people get a lot of grants and make a lot of money off of Northeast Central Durham.

So, you know, Carl—they were having--. They started out having these PAC (Partners Against Crime) meetings. And the first PAC meeting started at the Antioch Church down here on Holloway Street. And, you know, I think I attended one or two, one or two or them. And I was like, "Pretty interesting, you know. Sounds okay."

But I was doing—most of my community work was being done with Edgemont. I was doing all of my community work ( ) at Edgemont, not doing it with Northeast Central Durham. And, you know, kind of pulling some things together working with people.

And then all of a sudden Carl came. And he called me up one day. And I don't know where he got—where he come up with calling. But he called me up and invited me to lunch. And I thought, "Okay, go see what he wants." I knew who he was but, you know, I was just wondering what he wanted with me. And then he asked me would I be interested in being a part of Northeast Central Durham.

AR: And when was this that he invited you to join in on that?

JW: It was about the second year Northeast Central Durham was established.

AR: Ninety-six or so.

JW: They had--. They were ready to elect new chair people, new officers. And he came to me and he asked me. He said, he said, you know, "We need new blood in this

organization. And I feel like, you know, you can add something to it." And he kind of encouraged me to get involved. And asked me would I be interested in being a chair.

AR: Wow.

JW: I was like, I don't know about all of that, you know. Somebody ( ) organization. I have to wonder about it. I heard a lot about it, dealt with it a little bit, you know. And some of the people that started it, I don't ( ). I don't know. I'll have to think about it. And I finally, I said, "Well, throw my name in the hat." Never thinking that I'd be, you know, get voted in.

AR: So they actually voted you in. Is that how it worked?

JW: Uh-huh.

AR: Wow. So you must have had a pretty good reputation at that point. I mean if you hadn't been working within the organization how would people have voted you in.

JW: Well, I guess from doing other stuff in the neighborhood.

AR: Right.

JW: Doing other things. That's how he came to me.

AR: Yeah.

JW: From doing other things in the neighborhood and, you know—

AR: So you'd been active in other community stuff. What kind of community stuff were you doing in the neighborhood already?

JW: Like I said I actually established this group called Padlock, was one of the founders of it. We were actually doing a Saturday tutorial where we just came together as parents. We had nobody else involved in it. We didn't have any outside people. We

funded it. We went out and got people—we went out and got our volunteers and everything.

And we were actually doing a Saturday tutorial every Saturday where a few of us parents from Edgemont would meet. And we would tutor kids on Saturday. But it was non-traditional tutoring. We did tutoring—everything from field trips. But we would incorporate everything from math, reading and everything into it. And it was—it was working and people were hearing about it. I mean it was booming.

AR: That's pretty great.

JW: It was booming. We had a lot of interesting people involved. I don't know if you know Tema. What's Tema's last name?

AR: Caper? No. Tema Okun?

JW: Yeah. Yeah. Tema.

AR: I know her by name more than I know her by person.

JW: Yeah. Tema's one of my biggest supporters. She's out in California on sabbatical now. But she's one of my biggest supporters. Tema and her husband—we had Jessie. I don't know if you know Jessie. She worked with studies.

AR: Oh is it—. Is she in documentary study?

JW: Yeah. She was working with that. She's in Alaska now finishing school. Had a lot of interesting people. Curtis Al-Khaalig. He's working at the health spa. I had a lot of people that was involved in that. Big, good supporters of it.

AR: Involved in Northeast Central Durham?

JW: Um-hmm, involved in Padlock.

AR: In Padlock.

JW: Yeah.

AR: And what--? And now was Padlock the Saturday tutorial?

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Okay. Great.

JW: The Saturday tutorial we were doing for the kids in the neighborhood. No requirements to be in there, just be a neighborhood kid.

AR: That's great. How long did that--? Does that program still continue or--?

JW: That concept—we incorporated the concept because we, you know, we didn't have as much support parent wise. You know we just kind of got at a standstill where at any point where we could start back up. But we just had--. You know, because it was run by parents, all decisions were made by parents. It took on a life of its own. So we were doing that. And then had a couple of other things ( ) in Edgemont doing WSA. That was another group that we got—

AR: What's WSA?

JW: Women Striving to Achieve.

AR: This sounds like a great organization. Is that another ( )?

JW: That group is still happening over in Few Gardens. That was a group where I went over and worked with Martina Dunsford. And put together a group working with women over there in public housing and anybody else that wanted to be involved. Where you meet once a week and, you know, we discuss social—any issues that they have, we put them on the table. And we discuss them and try to figure out how to deal with them.

AR: And what kinds of issues would these be?

JW: They'd have everything from housing, boyfriends, children, anything. Just, you know, it was an open group. And we kind of dealt with different issues and—

AR: Sort of like women's advocacy stuff?

JW: Yeah.

AR: Yeah.

JW: It was basically like that.

AR: Yeah. Wow.

JW: And that group still is—it's still going on. They still meet once a week. And I think they're doing stuff like ceramics and, you know. It was a good concept. We incorporated that concept, too. We didn't want people to take our ideas—

AR: Now when you incorporate--. So you like literally made them incorporated organizations.

JW: Yeah. We actually went and incorporated.

AR: So you kind of founded or co-founded a number of different organizations.

JW: Um-hmm. Actually it was—sent the paperwork in—

AR: Padlock and Women Striving to Achieve.

JW: Had a couple of things. And now I've got a new—got a new group called BAHAA.

AR: BAHAA?

JW: Yeah. That's Blacks and Hispanics are alike. That's the latest one. That's incorporated.

AR: Now when did BAHAA start? How did--? Where did—

JW: BAHAA started out—

AR: ( )

JW: It started a year ago when we, you know--. That's when the Latino population at East Way started growing.

AR: Uh-huh. Now was that where you were first exposed to the kind of demographic changes with being in East Way and seeing a lot of Latino students?

JW: I think that's where it got to me at its most—at its highest rate, I think, at East Way. And kind of got together and that's when I started working with Perez. And I was like, you know, "What are we going to do about this, you know?" because I was basically sitting on the front door step every morning at East Way when the doors opened at seven thirty. Standing outside, opening the door, letting kids out of cars, you know, whatever it took, greeting parents, you know, trying to get them involved in school and things that go on in school. Trying to get, establish Parents on Patrol at East Way. That's where I had a group. I had a sturdy group of parent volunteers that came in every morning and every afternoon and manned the hallways, the entrance and exit and did things, kind of helped teachers out in classrooms, you know, the whole nine yards.

AR: And that was Parents on Patrol. Was that actually a group?

JW: Yeah.

AR: Wow. Did you incorporate that one, too?

JW: Incorporated that one, too. I haven't got an idea that I don't incorporate because I know people take your ideas and make money. So I have to incorporate so nobody can take that concept. See the concept is there. Anybody can use the concept but they have to get the permission. And that's why I have to incorporate everything. We did Parents on Patrol. That's still going on.

But the BAHAA's the latest. That's the one that we want to take--. I'm trying to take that school wide, the concept. See the idea of us establishing a group was to improve relations between black parents and Latino parents at East Way because there were none. There were no relations. It was like two different environments, you know. And the Latino parents were complaining to Ms. Perez about it.

But, you know, all we know is you come into school and you look at each other and you go opposite directions. And there was never any connection. It was like we got to figure out a way to connect these because the one thing we got in common is these kids we bring through the door everyday. So we had to figure out--.

So she and I sat down and we said, "Well what are we going to do? Let's invite them to breakfast." And that's what we did. We just invited them--. We had a breakfast one morning. And we talked about putting the group. And when the group started it didn't have a name. It was just basically a group that was meeting.

And we talked about, "Well, let's teach each other Spanish and let's teach them English. So we'll meet once a week." We started out meeting once a week. And basically we sit down. She would kind of—she would facilitate. And we would teach them basic English and we'd teach them basic Spanish. Just, you know, that's—

AR: ( ), yeah.

JW: We just wanted basic conversation of English and Spanish. We didn't need all of that other stuff at Durham Tech. We just need conversation so that when we see each other we can at least greet each other and ask you how you're feeling and what not. So we went through that.

And then we decided--. I think after we'd done that for a couple of weeks we started potluck Fridays where--. Basically on Wednesday, whenever we learned on Wednesday we'd have breakfast on Friday. And we'd use what we learned on Wednesday on Friday. And we started what we--. We actually started doing on Friday with our breakfast is inviting people in, different people to come to our breakfast on Friday to bring information to the parent, Latino and black. We had landlords coming because they had issues about housing.

AR: Wow. Oh, interesting.

JW: Yeah. We were inviting people, you know, that we knew we had issues with. So we were inviting landlords. And we had, I think, we had a couple of times we had city council, Lorisa [Seibel] came. We just, you know, and people whatever issues that they had if we had a meeting on Wednesday and say somebody has something that they were talking about that was an issue, then I said, "Well let me see who I can get to come." We even had the Mary Kay lady come and do facials.

AR: That's funny.

JW: I mean it was just--. Whatever we had issues about we'd bring people in. So we started inviting different people in on our breakfasts. So then the word got out about the group. And Channel 5 came in and decided to do a story on us. Now once Channel 5 did a story on us it was like, it was just— people started, "Oh."

AR: Oh yeah.

JW: People started. We had senior citizens coming over to East Way wanting to get in on the group.

AR: Wow.

JW: Then we met up--. You know then they did an article in the *Herald Sun*. And that gave us a little more exposure, right. And went from there and then got more people involved. And that's when we started dealing with Will Atwater from Seeds.

AR: Right, yeah.

JW: He heard about it. He wanted to improve his Spanish plus connect, too. So he came in and offered. And we started doing the community garden thing. And we started working that into our program. And—

AR: Wow. So in some ways it's like the education became the key for how all these other community issues got—started getting dealt with.

JW: Um-hmm, um-hmm. Because if you look at the school—the school is a breeding ground for whatever issues that come up because you got parents and children that come through the doors every day. And when those kids and those children come through that door, they have issues. I mean, you have parents that come through the door that may have had a bad night at home. You've got kids that come through the door that may have had to dodge bullets all night, you know. They have issues. And when they come through that door, that's the only place they have to deal with those issues. And how they deal with them determines how people listen to them.

A lot of times when children come into school they act out a certain way. They're acting because they went through something. If their behavior has changed overnight you have to look at, "wonder what happened in this child's life in that—in twenty-four hours" or ever how many hours it took for them to leave school and come back. So we started dealing with that.

And, you know, out of dealing with the Latino population we formed a good little relationship. We got--. You know, we have—we've done baby showers. We've had--. Since the first group started, our first core group started, we've had four babies born. We had one baby that died. Right now we got three mothers that, two mothers that's pregnant, having some problems. But see that's what we have to deal with. Out of the group we're dealing with all of the issues, everything that goes on with them.

AR: Right. Now what about like issues—because what you're talking about is issues that kids are bringing with them from home or, you know, just their environment. What about like racial tensions between African Americans and Hispanics? Did those come out? Did you see that played out at East Way among the kids or among the parents?

JW: Well it was played out. And that was one of the reasons for forming this group because Ms. Perez had brought it to my attention that the kids, the Hispanic kids were afraid when they came to school because when they were at home they wasn't--. When there was a rash of home invasions on Latinos—because they know they keep large amounts of cash in their homes. And the faces that they were seeing that was creating this crime—were provoking crime on them—were black. So when they came to school--. They'd coming to school and all they're seeing is black faces.

So, you know, they had a fear. They were actually fearing the kids at school because when they went home that's all they saw. They didn't see anything positive going on with black people. They just saw negative, you know, kicking the doors in and coming in the house robbing them. Had a couple of kids guns were held to their heads threatening to--. Holding the kids ( ) to get money from the parents. Stuff like that.

AR: Pretty scary.

JW: Yeah. And these kids when they came to school, they didn't have no—they didn't have a counselor---. You know, we had a counselor. But they weren't going to the counselor saying, "I need to talk" or anything. They were having to deal with that in their own way sitting in school looking at all these black faces around them. You know that had to be terrifying.

So Ms. Perez was telling me about how, you know, the kids were feeling. And I said, "Well we need to do something about that. If we can convince the parents that it's not all black people then maybe they can convince the children." And, you know, doing that has improved relationships, you know, because at one time it was tense.

And kids don't understand, you know. They're not able to, you know, put things in the right perspective. They only, you know, just deal with things as they see it. And they just, you know--. It got to that point where it had to be done. And we just put this group together and the group helped. The group helped, you know. And now we've got—we've got a bunch of friends around, you know. Every time I need a vote or something I just tell them to come, come, come and vote. And when I say hold your hand up, hold your hand up, you know.

AR: Now how many folks are involved in BAHAA?

JW: Well the core group--. The core actual group of people that started out and still maintains is about ten. But it grows. Like we could have a session on Wednesday and we could have about twenty people there or we could just have that core group of people. It depends on how people feel. But we're getting ready to open it up. We're going to start having it at Holloway Street now that Ms. Perez is now working

with housing that gives us a broader range. So we want to open it up to the total community. It was open at East Way. But you're talking about a school so that mainly we were dealing with the parents of that school. We want it to be open to anybody in Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Was it largely--? I mean what was the divide between African American and Hispanic, about fifty-fifty.

JW: Um-hmm, about fifty-fifty-.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Like I said we had a good group, really did, formed some good relationships there, went to a couple of parties with them.

AR: Right. So people started to build social connections, too.

JW: We started going to birthday parties. They were inviting us to birthday parties and stuff on the weekend at their houses. I invited them to my home. "Come over to my house, you know." We introduced them. Like I said, we learned—they learned how to eat grits, and bacon and eggs and stuff. Whereas I learned how to eat—drink chocalaiti and eat bean burritos for breakfast and whatever else. So, you know, we taught each other something.

AR: Learning about each other's cultures.

JW: Yeah. And that's what it was about. It was understanding cultures. And, you know, a lot of things I took for granted at one time I learned that, you know, it's—what is obvious to some people is not so obvious to others. And I learned that from them, you know. A lot of things that I just assumed just because, you know, they had--. I figure you're human just like me, I assume this is not. So I couldn't assume that, you

know, because there's a lot of things. There's a lot of cultural difference in how they do things, what they believe in, the whole nine yards.

AR: Yeah. What do you think is some of the source of those tensions? I mean, you know, you were talking about cultural differences that people are coming from really different cultural frameworks and it's hard to understand where each other is coming from? Or what do you see as kind of the points of conflict? And, I mean, community wide, not just at East Way.

JW: Well I think the conflict point in the community is just basically, you know, how they do things. How things are done in their culture versus how we do—how we're traditionally brought up to do things. Even in just--. When it comes to housing how we live, you know.

I wouldn't sit outside and have a twelve-pack on my doorstep and then when I get up I leave the empty cans of twelve-pack out there, you know. That's something I wouldn't do because I wasn't raised that way. And that's not in my culture. But if they do it, you know, who am I to say it's wrong. That's their culture. That's what their--. That's what they have been raised and taught to do. It doesn't make it right and it doesn't make it wrong. It's just saying that's your culture.

Now in understanding what we can do about it. Okay. Let's sit down and talk about how we can better do this, how we can handle this. And that's part of the problem about the housing thing as far as, you know, decent housing.

We had one landlord that ran us off some property one day. We went advocating for some Latinos. They invited us in. We brought the inspector and the landlord ran us

off the property. Told us—called the police, told us to leave, you know, because we were bringing attention to him and what he wasn't doing.

And he basically told us, he told us, he made a statement. He said, "I don't know why y'all here complaining. They're living better here than they would be in Mexico." And that's the way people generally think. That is actually what people are thinking, you know. They come here from wherever they come from and they're actually living one hundred percent better than what they would have been living if they had stayed in their country. So we--. If they're living in a house that has substandard heat, substandard plumbing or whatever. That's okay because that's a step up from what they were.

AR: Like self-justification.

JW: Yeah. It's justifying what you're doing and what you're not doing. So, you know, that's what we heard a lot of. And it's understanding. And then at the same time, Hispanics are going to have to understand that, you know, we understand that this is your culture and how you do things. But at the same time, you're moving into a culture and a way of living and other people expect certain things, you know. So, it's going to have to be give and take on both sides. And a lot of times folks are not willing to give and take.

AR: What about--? I've heard a lot of people talk about kind of the issue, you know, whether or not Hispanics are taking jobs that historically African Americans have held. Do you have a sense of that being an issue in Durham or not?

JW: Yeah. It's an issue. It's an issue because what has happened is the job market now that used to be dominated by Afro-American is not anymore because when we start asking for more money because, you know, of the economics, then they're

saying, "Well I can have me two or three Mexicans. I don't—hey. I don't need to pay you this amount. I can take what I pay you and split it in half and get two people to do this." And now that's the theory. And that's the theory of the employers, too. The employers know this.

So it's not so much that we as Afro-Americans believe that, you know, they're taking our jobs. Employers are actually allowing that to happen, you know. They're feeding into that concept, too. So somehow the employers are going to have to--. They'd rather hire a Hispanic person at a dollar fifty less than you would hire me to do the same job because you know you don't have to pay any taxes on this person or anything.

AR: You're talking about folks who are here illegally.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You've got people working everyday that have to take no taxes out of--. You're not responsible or anything on it. You just give them a straight up salary. And that's got to be less paperwork on you as an employer, less headache, less money you have to spend. So you benefit more by hiring them. Rather than—say you hire me and I come in and I'm going to the human relation commission. And I'm calling the NAACP. Rather than to put up with that headache, I don't have to deal with that. I've got a few Hispanics over here that'll work for next to nothing. So, you know—

AR: So it's an issue, the economic stuff really is. Is there a place though where--? I mean going to that Campaign for Better Housing rally, clearly there are people that see that both groups have something to benefit by working together.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: What are the areas where people can benefit? I mean, why should there be an alliance, if you see what I'm getting at. It makes sense to me that there should be an alliance. But, you know, what's the motivation? What do people see as the shared goals that both groups really have?

JW: I guess--. I don't know. I guess the shared goals that we have when we're working with the campaign to me, the shared goals that we have that everybody live in decent housing. It's just that simple. Nobody should be subjected to some of the things that we've seen out here when it comes to housing just because you were unfortunate enough not to be a legal citizen or you just happen not to be a person that, you know, of whatever social standards, you know. It just, you know--.

Our goal is to make sure that everybody has decent houses and the minimum policies applied should be enforced to help people reach their goal, you know. You know that's basically what this housing is because this housing, this campaign, we deal with much more than housing. We start--. Some of the housing issues that we've dealt with have gotten into things that we never even thought we would imagine we'd have to deal with. We've become social workers. I mean, we're dealing with people of issues that go far and beyond a leaky toilet stool or something like that, you know. We're just dealing with a lot of issues. And that kind of generates into something bigger than, you know--. And that's why I say this campaign as far as like the campaign itself speaks for itself. It is a campaign. And it goes beyond housing.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Just so much more.

AR: How did you get involved in that? I mean why, sort of when and how, and what were your motivations?

JW: I think we got involved--. Okay. We started East Way—they started a housing project to build houses in the area of Few Gardens. And it was the East Way Home Ownership. And that came through Northeast Central Durham. And what happened was, you know, we couldn't sell the houses because of the neighborhood, you know. You can't sell--. People are not going to purchase a $60,000 home and you got four or five boarded houses right beside it, and crime and everything else. So, it was like, we can't sell these houses. What are we going to do? We've got a development started here, can't do anything with it right now. The only thing that we're selling at this point is the habitat houses.

AR: Right. The Habitat for Humanity.

JW: You can basically give those away, you know. So, you know, ( ) equity, you can get a house in habitat. So--. Hughes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What?

JW: Are you going to pick up—

UM: Yeah. I'm on my way.

JW: All right. Then you come back and drop me off. All right?

UM: All right.

JW: Yeah. So—

AR: So you got started—what year would that have been? Was that out of the—

JW: This is two years now.

AR: So that was around the same time as BAHAA started.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah. Yeah. And were you one of the people who helped found this movement?

JW: Well when Lorisa came to me, basically, I got involved in this from the beginning. You know, she called us up and we talked about it. And we talked about the issues, you know, because basically everything we're doing here we have been doing all along in the community. But we needed a stronger group that could go before the Housing Appeal board and go before the Housing Department. We needed a stronger group. So, you know, we just felt like if we pooled our resources and all our support then we could make more of an impact.

AR: Right.

JW: Rather than just, you know, got two or three individuals over here in Northeast Central Durham that's going down there talking to whoever and not really getting anything accomplished. So it was just a collaboration of the different people who were doing the same thing in their community.

AR: Yeah. And now who's involved: blacks, Hispanics, whites, the whole—

JW: Blacks--. See you've got--. It's diverse, a very diverse group. We even got some slumlords. We've got one that's been gracious enough--. I have to give him credit because I wouldn't have showed up if I was him. But he has been coming. And he's been coming to the meetings and he has been participating. And he's taken an interest in it because he knows there are problems.

And we have to hear from both sides. We can't just dump it all on the landlords and say, "Well, you know, you should be doing this and doing that" and just get radical. So we understand that landlords have issues, too, you know. You've got a piece of property. You can't make money off it if you have to continue to put repairs into it from other people's neglect. So, you know, we understand that. So that's what--.

This campaign is basically to create a bond where you don't have just radical groups attacking different people, you know. You've got a radical group attacking a landlord. You've got a radical group attacking the Hispanics. You've got radical groups—we want one group that can deal with all the issues. And deal with it in a manner where it's civil and not real out there. So that's what the campaign does; the campaign kind of deals with the issues on a level head.

AR: How many people are involved in the organization?

JW: It's—

AR: Are we talking a dozen or twenty, thirty, forty--?

JW: We've got more than a dozen people involved. We've got people from--. These are all your sponsors.

AR: Wow. So you have like local sponsors as well as individuals in other words.

JW: Right.

AR: Wow. These are a lot of organizations here.

JW: And we started out with probably about just a small list right there. And just people have bought into the concept. Over the last two years all these people have—they bought in. They got on board. And, you know, it's making our group strong. It's

making it strong to the point that we're right now in the process of trying to get some policies changed at state level when it pertains to houses. And, you know, we're trying to get some things in place here in Durham. So, you know, that's why we needed a stronger group with, you know, more diversity in it.

AR: To really have some clout ( ).

JW: Right. To have some impact you have to do that, you know. You--. One or two people they say, "Here come the radical people again," you know, "that trouble maker." I've heard that all the time. So you have to have a lot of support. That's why I like the network.

AR: Um-hmm. Well you were already networking long before you landed here. So how did you come--? Jackie, how did you come to be kind of this community liaison? You know, like lots of people could be doing this work but aren't. What is it about you or your family make up or, you know, what you've experienced that you care enough to do this?

JW: Well I guess I do care. That's one of the things. I'm compassionate. I'm not judgmental. I don't try to judge anybody in their situation. And I think people understand that. So when I deal with people I think people have gotten the understanding that I'm not a person that's going to come and try to judge your situation. I'm only here to help you deal with whatever you're dealing with in the best manner it can be dealt with. I'm not going to try to steer you wrong. I'm going to try to help you. If I can't help you I'm going to try to lead you to the people that you need to be talking to, you know.

And that's what my networking is about to have a strong enough base of people that any time I have a situation come up, all I have to do is say, "Okay, you wait right here. Let me contact so and so and then I'll get back with you." And be able to do that and be able to make a difference, not just talk.

AR: But why does it matter to you to make a difference? I guess what I'm getting at is a lot of people who, you know, are pretty comfortable, pretty secure, you know, don't have to do this. I mean you could not do this. You could just attend to your children and--. You know what I'm saying?

JW: But I do have to do it because, like I tell people, it only takes one paycheck to put you in the same situation of people that you ( ).

AR: Exactly.

JW: I mean people just don't see it that way. It could take one flick of the switch and you could be right there in that spot of those people that are having all these difficulties. It doesn't take much. And if people are looking at things like--. A lot of people think that once they reach that peak of society that they want to be at, you know, "Oh nothing can tear me down and I don't have to look at those people. So why should I be bothered?"

But at the same time I look at it like this. I live here. I don't plan on going anywhere, you know. And, you know, every time I step out my door I see people living a certain way. And, you know, it's beneath me because of the way I was raised. I just can't believe that people, other people, would allow people to live a certain way. It just seems like everybody should have some kind of compassion about--. You look at your

family. Everybody--. You know, you may have reached that peak but it doesn't mean everybody in your family has.

AR: Exactly.

JW: Finding that one person in your family that hasn't reached it. I mean just put yourself in those people's position. And that's what I do. I try to put myself in their position and see, you know, how I would feel.

I know how I feel. That's why I go deal with people. I go out in the community. I talk to people. I let people know I'm here if you need me. I'm open. I'm not trying to hide nothing from you. I'm not trying to use you. I'm not trying to make money off you or nothing like that. I'm just here. Because most of my work ( ) I make nothing off of. I mean—

AR: It's all volunteer what you do.

JW: It's all volunteer.

AR: Exactly. Yeah.

JW: You know and—

AR: Well, how did you end up becoming sort of a liaison with the Latino community. I mean when did you and Katushka start working together?

JW: Katushka started working for Northeast Central Durham Helping Parents Help Children. And when she came into our program she started doing the--. What was she? She was doing the daycare project. I think she was doing like the zero to five daycare projects. And basically her and Rogelio—he's another gentleman that works with us, Rogelio. He's still working with her. But basically they were going out in the community and they were linking with the families that had kids between zero and five.

And they were doing group with them. And I was like, "Oh my god. I've got to get in on this." And then we both work at the same center. Right. And I was like, "Well, let me see what they're doing? Let's see if I can put my group in touch with them." So then--. We worked together so it was just natural that, you know--. Network. [Laughter] Network.

AR: You must have been raised networking.

JW: I guess I was. That's all I can say. It's networking to me. It's like—

AR: So she was doing similar work as you were but in the Latino community.

JW: Right. That's exactly right. She was doing similar work but she was doing it in the Latino--. I need her. I need her to help me with some things. So then I started asking her to do things, help me with fliers and different things when I needed to get information out. And after we did some door to door we picked up--. We have family night every now and then at the center where we invite all the neighborhood. Anybody can come. We do a movie and we feed them. And, you know—

AR: And that's the Holloway Center, Holloway Street.

JW: That's the Northeast Central Durham Community Service Center. We do, you know, those family nights. And that's why I've got big nights. And being that I know a lot of the kids, a lot of the Latino kids in the neighborhood from school and what not, I go and pick them up. And they hop right on the van when I pick them up. So, she had called me a couple of times. We did a couple of door to door ( ). And, you know, we got some things that we were discussing that we wanted to do. So, that's--. Basically, it just had to be.

AR: It was a natural match.

JW: Yeah.

AR: But I guess one thing that strikes me is, you know, we were talking earlier that when you first came to Durham there were hardly any Latinos.

JW: That's right.

AR: How did you feel when you had new Latino neighbors? Was there ever a time in which you were a little kind of—

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

START OF TAPE 2, SIDE A

AR: This is the continuation of the interview with Jackie Wagstaff at her home in Durham, North Carolina. Today's date is December first 1998. This is Alicia Rouverol. My tape number is 12198jw.2. Part of the New Immigrants Project.

So you were saying that you did initially have a response. You said something like that you were wondering what's happening here or something like that.

JW: Like the rest of the people, I'm not going to tell no lie. I'm not going to sit here and lie about it. Like the rest of the people. Gracious, what's going to happen? We're losing our jobs. You know, what are we going to do. It's like. I know everybody went through it. It's like what--. I wanted to know. I was curious to know if there's something that's going on in Durham that I don't know about that's drawing—that's attracting all the Latino population. I wanted to know. I was asking questions. And I just, you know--.

But at that point, it was like it really hadn't affected anything that I was doing until, you know, we started our—our enrollment started increasing at ( ). That was the beginning. It was like, you know, we had the enrollment. That's even before we had Ms.

Perez. We didn't even have her then. We had kids coming in but we didn't have no way of communicating with them.

AR: And was there anyone on staff that spoke any Spanish at all or no?

JW: No. We didn't have anybody at that time.

AR: It must have been rough.

JW: It was rough. We had kids coming in and we had--. Then we had Miss Shaw. She was our first ESL teacher to come in. We had Miss Shaw. And what Miss Shaw--. She was okay but she just--. She wasn't--. She didn't have that--. I don't know. She wasn't a Ms. Perez. She didn't have that.

AR: Was she Latino or no?

JW: No.

AR: She was just Spanish speaking.

JW: She's just Spanish speaking. She wasn't Latino. I guess that's why there wasn't really that connection there because the parents didn't feel that—I guess the kids didn't either. But she was the ESL teacher, you know. She could teach them English and she could speak some Spanish. But it just wasn't a connection there. So, you know, you know, for the last couple of years it was like the population started doubling. It was like okay.

And I think the word got out that Eastway was a better to school to be--. Especially when they got Ms. Perez there. It was like all them Latino kids--. Because Eastway you can apply to go there because it is a year round. You can choose for your children to go there. It's not like an assignment.

AR: And that's a fairly newer school. Isn't Eastway--. Yeah.

JW: It's only three years old. They celebrated their third birthday last week.

AR: Wow.

JW: So it was like--. I think the word got out in the community among the Latinos there, if you want to send your kids somewhere where you got somebody that can deal with them, send them to Eastway. And everybody just started coming to Eastway. It was like that was the area for them.

AR: What percentage of a class would be Latino roughly? I mean do you have a sense of that. Was it ten or—

JW: Now?

AR: Yeah or during that time period.

JW: Well we started out probably with about--. We have about a hundred kids now, Latino kids at Eastway.

AR: Out of a total school population.

JW: Out of a total of six hundred plus.

AR: Wow.

JW: So, you know, and that increased. That increases everyday. Because it's like we get new enrollment every day.

AR: Wow. And what grades is Eastway again?

JW: It's five through--. It's pre-K through fifth grade.

AR: Pre-K through five, okay.

JW: We have a pre-K program.

AR: Yeah. So once the kids are there they're there for a number of years.

JW: Yes, uh-huh. So that helps.

AR: Pretty important time period, too.

JW: So, you know, we've got kids that we've grown up on.

AR: Yeah.

JW: A lot of kids and they're comfortable now. They're comfortable in the neighborhood. They're comfortable with the school. They're comfortable with the kids. They're, you know--. Like we--.

Actually, what happens is a lot of the kids once they--. If they start off early like kindergarten they've actually turned their back on their own heritage. Because we had one little girl that didn't want to be recognized as Latino. She wouldn't speak no Spanish. She said she didn't want--. She kind of related more to Afro-America than she did her own culture.

AR: Interesting. Where was she--? Where was she from originally, do you know.

JW: She was from--. She was out in California. I think she was out in California. But her family's originally from Mexico. But she just did not want to be recognized. We tried to get her involved in some groups, some groups with kids and have her as one of the mediators. Nope. No. She didn't want—

AR: Why do you supposed that was?

JW: I think there was so much negativity on [telephone rings] Hispanics.

AR: Right.

JW: It was just negativity. I'll let the machine pick up.

AR: Okay, great.

JW: So she just, you know, didn't want to go there.

AR: Wow.

JW: She felt comfortable--. She felt more comfortable relating to black. All her girlfriends [telephone rings] were black. She just felt better that way.

AR: Is there—are there many white students at Eastway or is it [telephone rings] largely African American and Hispanic?

JW: Probably about--. Now there's probably about ten.

AR: That's not a lot.

JW: Huh-uh. It's always been predominately blacks. Well, when it was Holloway and East End it was black schools. We never--. We've only had averaged about five to ten white kids at any time even when it was two schools.

AR: Wow, yeah.

JW: Because the neighborhood--. You have to look at the neighborhood.

AR: Right, yeah.

JW: So we just never had that many. The Hispanics are--. They're the probably the first time we had some diversity, some real diversity.

AR: That's really interesting. So then to think that really the color barrier was broken by Latinos versus white.

JW: Umm-hmm. It was.

AR: Yeah.

JW: And when you look at it--. When I look at it--. When you say Hispanics and black, I look at them as being no different than us. I really do. Because if you look at it social wise—and this is just my perception—they're looked upon the same way we are.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Now that's my--. I may be wrong but that's my perception. I just don't see that much different other than culture. I don't see that much different in us and them.

AR: So then in a lot of ways there would be a lot to bring the community together.

JW: Yeah. We have a lot in common.

AR: Right. It's a lot of what, you know, stuff that I've read about, you know, black brown relations in California, you know, is that people are really looking at, you know, the whole relationship with white, the white majority, and white supremacy and, you know. If you're not white and you're black or you're Hispanic that you're dealing with a lot of the same issues.

JW: Yeah. So it's like, you know, I just see them as being in the same boat we're in. It just seems like maybe we as blacks have taken it to another level like to make it different out of it because we are so—we have so much in common.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You know, that we need somebody to vent on.

AR: Yeah. So you mean in terms of relations between blacks and Hispanics is that—

JW: I think that's why you have the most difficulty in understanding them is because blacks feel like well we've always been at the bottom of the totem pole so now we've got somebody else a little bit lower than us. So, hey, we can take advantage of that. But it's not we all--. We just in reality we are in the same boat. We're, you know, we're looked upon the same way.

AR: What's the reality of that same boat? I mean what's the challenges of being in that boat that both African Americans—

JW: Learn to get along with each other. That's the first thing you have to learn to deal with the differences. You're going to have to learn how to understand them. And you're going to have to learn how, you know, if there is a different what can I do to make this situation better for me. And basically that's what they're going to have to do. You know, you just can't keep saying, bury your head in the sand and saying, well, we different and I'm just not going to deal with it. Or there's going to continue to be the tension that there is now. But I think, you know, a lot of that tension that's perceived to be in the newspapers, it's not as bad as it has been written about.

AR: See, that's what I've heard to is that there's ways in which it gets inflamed in the media.

JW: Every time an incident come up and it involves an Hispanic family, the media blows it out of proportion. And they make it seem like we have a race war going on in Northeast Central Durham. It's always in Northeast Central Durham because for some reason this is like a hot spot. And, you know, they just blow it out of proportion. But, in reality, it's not as bad as they say it is. It's just one—

AR: Yeah.

JW: Before the population got as diverse as it is now, that was happening among blacks on blacks.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You had home invasions going on—blacks invading black homes. But you wasn't seeing it in the newspaper like that.

AR: Yeah. So what—

JW: It wasn't a black on black crime, was it?

AR: So what do you think is the rationale behind why we're reading about that now?

JW: It gives people something to--. I don't know maybe missionary people need to read about stuff like this or maybe they want to come in. It maybe gives them something they feel like if I go in and I help this community out with these relations that makes me feel good about myself. I don't know.

I think the media blows it out of proportion. They need something to keep their paper alive for one thing, you know. They blow it all up. They take one little incident and make it seem like it's an every day, five day a week thing going on. And it's not. I mean, it's, like I said, the same thing that's happening was happening a couple of years ago just to blacks—black on black. They were doing it to each other.

AR: So--. And the question was why weren't we hearing about it then.

JW: No. You wasn't hearing about it. But you hear about it now. Every time an incident comes you hear about it. And that's one of the things maybe the media needs to be a—they need to put a muzzle on and stop doing that and stop blowing it--. They don't talk about the good stuff that go on.

AR: Right. And that doesn't help build good relations.

JW: No.

AR: Yeah.

JW: I mean we--. I mean it doesn't. It just tears the community apart.

AR: Well and some people say that, you know, that some people have a vested interest in blacks and Hispanics not getting along. Do you agree with that? Do you think there's a truth to that?

JW: Yes I do. I mean if you keep us not getting along you'll always make money. There'll always be some financial gain from it. You can always have people that come in and have these well-intended ideas. And say, oh well, let me go over there and do this little survey on Northeast Central Durham when it relates to blacks and Hispanics. And I'll write this little proposal. You know, you can always--. Everybody has their own interest and their own ulterior motives. And I, you know--. You have to live here to understand it. It's not what like people say.

AR: And what's it like being on the side that's always receiving that. I mean you're talking about studies, you know, being done on—

JW: Then you become fearful—the community. That's why I'm with an organization that basically every time somebody wants to come in and do a study or get some money, they have to come to us. They have to come to Northeast Central Durham and ask us to support them. And once we--. I guarantee you if you want to write a grant and you want to get that grant approved and get that money, if you came to Northeast Central Durham and we support it, you're guaranteed to get that money. That's how strong—

AR: Because of the reputation, yeah.

JW: That's how strong an organization we have with Northeast Central Durham. We can guarantee you we get the money. But once you get it--. We have been dealt with that so much that now we are just, you know, every--. People may have good

intentions and might want to do something. But it's—it makes us very skeptical of people coming in. And people think we're being hard. But it's not. It's because we feel like we're being used as guinea pigs, you know. People come in and say okay, we just these need these demographics. We need these people. We need the--. And, you know, they get it and that happens. And we are being used as lab rats, to me.

AR: Yeah. I was reading--. Actually I was reading about AIDS in the black community and people talking about the whole, like people not getting treatment because people have lots of mixed feelings about the Tuskegee study, you know, that whole thing that they feel like they don't want to go there.

JW: That's all it takes. That's all it takes. I mean you get—once you get a bad taste in your mouth you're not--. It's like anything. If--. You're not going to eat something you didn't like the taste of then.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You're not going to try to—

AR: You can't go there again, yeah.

JW: You're not going to try it twice just until somebody makes you like it.

AR: Yeah.

JW: It just doesn't happen. And that's what has happened to this community. It's like this community has been used so much. And in the process of being used we don't benefit nothing out of it. I mean we don't even get the help that supposedly the people come in and say help they going to give us.

AR: Yeah.

JW: They end up getting what they want financially and they end up leaving us. And most of the time they leave us in worse shape than when they came in. They use us to that point.

AR: What do you think is the solution to that situation?

JW: Get more community people involved in the process. We can do that, you know. If there's going to be some financial gain--.

One of Northeast Central Durham's goals—we have missions and goals. And one of our goals is to decrease unemployment. And our mission is to provide, you know, quality education, decrease sub-standard housing, the whole nine yards, economic development. We have missions and goals. And in order to meet those goals, if you got people coming in getting million dollar grants off of us, you know, using us and getting it and we don't get anything out of it—not even a job, not even a prospects of a job—then what did we—what purpose did we serve other than a lab rat. We served no purpose. I mean it's just that simple. We, you know--.

At some point you got to look at, okay, if you come in here and say you want to make some money off us, what do we get out of it. What is it? Is it--? When you leave is the community going to have a park sitting over here that's safe for our kids to go into and play. Is the community going to have a center over here we can do tutoring and all that? What are we going to get out of it? You know, that's what we want to see. And that's basically where we're at now. When anybody comes in we tell them, well what do we plan on, what do we receive from this? Are there any benefits that we can say that's tangible. That's something that you can tell us, well, you know, well, just to study.

AR: Yeah.

JW: You know we want tangible stuff. We want to know what we benefit from this. And people--. And most of Northeast Central Durham has really gotten fed up with people coming in with good intentions. They really have. The taste is really bad and they don't like it.

AR: And are these sort of demographic studies or crime studies? Is it--?

JW: Everywhere--. We had a person come for instance want to do an alcohol—we've done an alcohol and wine study. We know who sells the most malt liquor. We know where all the malt liquor and wine is sold in Northeast Central Durham. We know where the majority of convenience stores that sell in Northeast Central Durham. Now, what else are you going to come in and add to this? Nothing. It's already been done. So who are you benefiting? And that's where we're at.

AR: So it sounds like your feeling is the most benefit is going to come from insiders, community members, working together to do stuff. What about like--?

JW: And not only community--. Communities, like myself, I tell anybody, every time something come up, like we're doing a safe haven. They're always saying, you want it to work for me. No. I don't want to work for you. I want to continue to do what I do, advocate for other people because I'm not--. You know, if I want to work, then I'll go out and get the nine to five. But that's not what I want to do right now. I'm not saying I don't work. I'm just saying I ( ) nine to five.

But, you know, I don't want to get wrapped up in there so it'll look like my goals are just to benefit myself. You know, because the first time--. Every time a grant comes through, well, she gets a job every time a grant come through. You know what she's doing. Yeah. That's not my goal.

My goal is to help other people: other get employment, other people get out of poverty. I mean you can't make it out of poverty at five fifty an hour. You can't do it. It's impossible. I mean, it's work to work first. This work from welfare to independent, it's not going to work. All you're going to do is promote a bigger problem especially in communities like this because you got most of your welfare recipients in communities like this. So you're going to have a problem. When they cut out AFDC and this Work First there's going to be a big rash of crime that's going to drop. And then that paper's going to be full of stuff. It's going to happen.

I mean, you taking people—you've taken people off the system that's been on the system for years, no skills, no nothing, and you're saying just because they have to go to work, they got to go to work. And they're going to go to work making five fifty an hour with four, five or more kids in the household can't support--. You can't do it. It is impossible. And then they say, well the system says you have to do it. The system is not living over here in Northeast Central Durham or any northeast central Durham. The system is living up on the mountain. Most people that are sitting there dictating would not even set foot in these areas.

So you know, the system doesn't work. And that's why you have to have people out there that care, that's going to work for the community. And, like I said, in the process of these people coming in wanting to do things and all these well intentions, they're going to have to involve the community. They have to let the community have some involvement.

AR: Or it's not gonna—it's doesn't work. Yeah. Exactly.

JW: Um-hmm. Like we got people that come. And we have two or three grants now. We employ—in Northeast Central Durham we probably have about seven people employed at that center.

AR: Wow. That's pretty amazing.

JW: Myself and one other person is the only person out of this community that actually lives in this community employed. That says something about how we employ.

AR: Yeah.

JW: So—

AR: Interesting. So you're one of two who are in the neighborhood.

[Sound of children. Laughter.]

JW: ( ) come in loud. They come in loud.

AR: No they were good. They got with the program. I should probably let you go here. Is there anything you'd like to add? I mean, it sounds like--. Let me just clarify. You actually, you actually work at Northeast Central then. That's like your—is that your official job?

JW: I'm assigned to Eastway through ( ).

AR: So that's—so you're doing some paid work.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah. So it's not like you're, you know, doing all volunteer work, which is tough to pull off.

JW: Well, most of it is.

AR: Most of it is. Yeah, yeah. But why you're meaning is you're not lining your pockets on all these grants coming through obviously. Yeah.

JW: No. I don't want to.

AR: Yeah.

JW: If I want a grant I write myself one—[laughter]—for a sabbatical.

AR: Exactly. So is there a sense--. We should close up here. It's getting late. Is there anything that we haven't covered that you know, gets at some of these issues that we're trying to deal with on this project, you know, about the new immigrant community, Latinos, Latinos and African Americans—

JW: No. I think we've about covered everything, I think, everything that we need to cover was covered.

AR: Yeah.

JW: I don't think there's not much we didn't.

AR: Not much we didn't touch on.

JW: No. I don't think there was much we didn't touch on. I think we about covered anything. Do you see anything we didn't cover?

AR: I think we've covered most areas because we've talked about how y'all met, the goals of the campaign—or the Campaign for Better Housing is within the Northeast Central Neighborhood Association.

JW: No, the campaign for ( ) just a collaborative effort. No ( ) just one of the sponsors.

AR: I see.

JW: It's a collaborative effort. You see we got—

AR: So it's a separate organization.

JW: Right. Campaign for decent housing is just collaborative with all of these things.

AR: I see. So it's supported—it's sort of sponsored by these organizations.

JW: Yeah, all those organizations.

AR: I see. And that would be one of like a number of different projects that NECD supports.

JW: Yeah. Campaign is just one because we have task force and housing task force is a task force that kind of deals with the housing campaign.

AR: Yeah. So I think we talked about the make up of the Campaign for Better Housing of who's involved with that. Did we cover NECD? Like who--. Is that mostly just neighborhood members.

JW: In order to be a NECD member and board member you have to be a resident of Northeast Central Durham. It's a requirement in our by-laws. We have by-laws.

AR: Yeah. And what streets do you mark Northeast Central?

JW: There is ninety-six blocks that goes as far as Hoover Road, Hardee Street, Five Points, Albre—it's a ninety-six hundred square. And I can show you. But I don't have the map right now. But I need to show you the map.

AR: Yeah, the whole area.

JW: It incorporates a large section.

AR: And is that as ethnically mixed, racially mixed as campaign for decent housing? Is that also pretty mixed or is it mostly ( )?

JW: African Americans and Latinos.

AR: And Latinos, yeah.

JW: Yeah. Well, they have got some whites. But the biggest make up is African Americans.

AR: Have you seen improvement in African American and Hispanic relations in the last couple years?

JW: Yes I have.

AR: Yeah. What would you point to specifically that gives you that sense?

JW: The decrease in the home invasions that we had been hearing about so often at one time. You rarely see it now. You still have people getting robbed. That's going to continue as long as we have people and no jobs. But that decrease alone from not seeing it always in the paper made me believe that, you know, that's not—there has been some improvement.

AR: So you've seen growth. Yeah. What do think are—and again this is kind of back to that needs and interest and goals thing. What are ways that you think Hispanics and African Americans can come together? I mean what are the best ways to build these coalitions?

JW: More groups like the one we have.

AR: So you think that the community based work is really what does it.

JW: Yeah. The community-based work is going to be the key. That's going to be the key because you've got to have your base. And if that base is in Northeast Central Durham it's Northeast Central Durham.

AR: Yeah.

JW: Partners Against Crime.

AR: Right.

JW: That's the base, you know, because we are diverse.

AR: Right. And, Partners Against Crime—that's PAC, right?

JW: Yeah, Partners Against Crime.

AR: Yeah. And in terms of goals and interests, you were saying that people are—they're essentially in the same boat. Are there ways in which there are different goals and interests or do you think most of the goals and interests of the Northeast Central—you know, African Americans in Northeast Central Durham would be in line with the Hispanic.

JW: In these eight neighborhoods?

AR: Yeah.

JW: Yeah. I think they're basically the same in line.

AR: Despite cultural differences people want the same things.

JW: Basically people want, they want fair and decent housing. They want jobs that provide decent income. They want safe neighborhoods for their kids to grow up. They want, you know, decent education.

I mean, basically the goals are the same of all of us, you know. I don't think there's much of a difference. I don't think there's any difference. That's my perspective. And I don't think there's any difference. I just think the way we perceive it is the only difference, you know.

As far as how it's done, I mean, if we start looking at things as more collaborative efforts and start doing things as a unit, together, we can accomplish more. Because like they say, united we stand, divided we fall. And that's what happens every time. We get

more united regardless of what your ethnic background is. Then we can accomplish a lot more. Then that's—this campaign right here shows that. With all of the support that we have we get more done with this effort. And have these many people involved than if it was just me and Lorisa and maybe one or two other people.

AR: And you've had some victories already with this campaign.

JW: Um-hmm.

AR: Yeah. What kinds of things?

JW: We just recently--. Well, we had two campaigns. We had some crime issues dealt with in some certain areas. We just recently, yesterday, went to the city council. And it's in that paper right there.

AR: Great.

JW: And we're getting ready—they're getting ready to do some things that they should have been doing a year ago. But with the support that we have from campaign when we go before them people are listening now.

AR: You've got the clout

JW: Yeah. They're not just saying, oh, you know, here comes that group again or here comes that Jackie. Every time I look up here she comes. ( )

AR: Sounds like a title to a song, here comes Jackie.

JW: Here she comes again. And now they're seeing that other people are dealing with these same issues and having these problems. And, you know, they're dealing with us on a different level. They're looking at us more of an alliance of strength. They're not looking at us as individuals that's just out there being radical trying to stir up stuff. We're stirring the pot and we need to leave alone.

AR: Right.

JW: That's not happening anymore, you know. They're looking at it as, like I said, NECD is a force to be reckoned with. There's no doubt about that.

AR: I think it's really--. I mean I think y'all's in some ways are really a model because I know that, you know—at least out in California—people are trying to build more alliances. What they call sort of black/brown alliances that they're trying to get people to this place of sort of working together. And it seems like y'all have done it. I mean I think that's really admirable.

JW: And that's what I say, networking. Go networking. We're networking now. We've got enough networking going on that--. You know, we, you know, I can't say it's me but I know that working with Northeast Central Durham has improved my understanding of how the system works. A lot of things before I didn't know about and I didn't understand. But now I got the system to an art. [Laughter]

AR: You can teach classes in it.

JW: I know how to access the system, you know. So that's just one of the things that you learn. It's a learning experience, you know. Even though--.

And what we try to do is we update our board every year. We don't try to keep the same people in position. That's one of our goals. We, you know, we nominate new people every year. We promote leadership, you know. And that's how you promote it. You can't have the same people always in the same position because then they'll say well, dang they ain't doing anything. They got the same people running that thing.

So every year we elect a whole new board of people so that, you know, everybody has the opportunity to become leaders in the community. And that's what it's about, it's promoting leadership.

AR: Great.

JW: The NECD does that. We can't have the same people. We refuse to. What Don?

AR: Maybe—should we end it on that note? That's pretty—yeah. Anything more you want to add or we're pretty much there. Don was ( ). [Laughter] Yeah. Great. Good. Well I think it sounds great. Thanks a lot for the interview, Jackie.

JW: No problem, no problem.

AR: Okay. I'm going to go ahead and shut down here. This is Alicia Rouverol with the Southern Oral History Program and it's the end of the interview with Jackie Wagstaff.

END OF INTERVIEW