

[Interviewed by Gretchen Howard]

INTERVIEW WITH PENNY PATCH

October 22, 1994

Q Well, we can start out just telling me a little of your background before you were involved in SNCC; how you got involved?

A How I got involved. I was a student at (inaudible) College in Pennsylvania and that was in 1961. Previous to that I went to high school in New York City. And I think my first awareness really that had anything to do with the movement had to do with, there were people picketing Woolworth stores in 1960.

Q So, everybody got involved with (inaudible)?

A Well, I didn't get involved at that point, but I think that that's when I became aware that there was something going on. I grew up in a family that was always political and socially aware and quite unbigoted so, you know, was not in my case a great leap to what I did, really, although, I mean I think that what I did was probably a leap from the attitudes were not all that different from my parents in contrast to Dorothy's situation or Casey's to a lesser degree. So I was at (inaudible). I went to college because that was the next thing to do. I was a history, I mean I thought I was going to be a history major. And, pretty immediately upon my arrival at (inaudible), which would have been the Fall of '61, a young woman, again I'm not sure of the date, but sometime in that semester, a young woman named Mimi Finegold came who was a student at (inaudible), had gone on the Freedom Ride and she came back to campus and she talked on campus about it and I remember being just absolutely riveted by what this young woman, what somebody like me, you know, a year or so older had

done. And there were also at that time, there was another young woman, Charlotte Phillips, these are all people who became SDS women, by the way, who was spending --that my first semester -- Charlotte was an exchange student at (inaudible) and so she would come back or she would write back with the stories and it was a political action (inaudible) so I joined that. And by the end of the first semester or early in the second semester, what we were doing was going to join all these numbers of other students from the area, mostly from the areas. I mean, we would go with students from mostly white colleges but we then would join up with students from Temple University and schools in Baltimore. There was a mix of black and whites going on their weekends down to sit in restaurants (inaudible) and that's where I first met with SNCC people who had come up -- I think that they were coming to make contact with the students up there and to organize and to hook them up with SNCC and also specialty recruit, primarily black students (inaudible). So that second semester, I began to go on weekends on these sit-ins (inaudible) got arrested a couple of times. The first time I was arrested was on a march from Baltimore to Washington and I don't remember exactly what the march was about, to tell you the truth.

Q What year was this?

A '61, early '62. The first one, I was arrested, I know it was in March of '62. And, I was just increasingly drawn into, I mean, I think that what drew me most powerfully, to tell you the truth, was really the community and the experience of being involved (inaudible) that I really believed in so what was pulling

me (inaudible) and probably in my personal history too and I don't know if you, you know, if that's something that you want to know about. You can if you do but I don't want to spend a lot of time on that. I think you want to know a little bit about the family

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Q Sure, that would be great.

A Okay. The family I came out of, my family was in the foreign service and we traveled. And I lived, you know, I went to like 15 different schools in my first 15 years. And we lived in a number of different countries and different cultures and I picked up and moved a lot of times. So, I think, I mean in retrospect, what I understand is that I was, number one, really well equipped to go into a different culture and it was not in some ways such a big deal for me as it might have been for other middle class, white young women, although my exposure to the African American culture had been very little. You know, I had lived in China, Czechoslovakia, Europe and, you know, lots of different places. And the other thing that set me up for it was because of that nomadic childhood, anything that would provide me with a sense of community was very, very attractive and I was a reasonably alienated young person by the time my parents brought us back to this country and wanted us to set up roots, you know, as a teenager, it was not something that I was really good at. So, although I didn't do anything particularly rebellious in high school and I was basically successful and got good grades and got elected to offices and so on and so forth. I was not, you know, I was not a (inaudible) part of the American dream. So, I think

that's probably why I, as opposed to some other person, really dove into it when the moment presented itself. So, in that Spring, I mean I was still in school, I think I was having difficulty doing the work and my, certainly my energy was focused totally elsewhere. And at that point, Charles (inaudible) who was the head of a SNCC project in Albany, Georgia was proposing to take an integrated group into Albany and the surrounding counties to attempt to help (inaudible). There were people, I mean this was, I do believe SNCC's, the first effort to do anything like this. And there were people in SNCC, I mean, there were only like 20 people at that point. There were people who, at that point, disagreed fundamentally. That early on certainly. To a great degree because they simply thought it was insanity and particularly when (inaudible) some white women who would come that this would put the black staff at massive risk to have us out there in the field and we had, you know, white people were in SNCC since the very, very beginning, and white women were, but it was mostly in office situations. But, the way things worked at that point was that people who wanted to do something did it. If it didn't work out then, (inaudible)

Q (inaudible)

A Well, this was south Georgia, not Albany, New York, no, no, Albany, Georgia. The place that just had all the floods. It's way down in the southwestern part of the state, just a little bit from Florida, actually. It's like 90 miles south of Atlanta. It was, at the time, I think, I mean, it was a city, like 60 thousand people. And there was something called the Albany



Movement that had it's origin even before SNCC. And then Sherrod went in there in '61, he and another student named Charlie Jones and after a while another one named (inaudible) the black community organized what became the Albany Movement. And then there was a point, it was '62 when I got there, Martin Luther King announced (inaudible) So, anyway, Sherrod came recruiting for the summer of '62 and --

Q (inaudible)?

A No, I think I actually met him somewhere in Maryland, I don't think he came to the school. I volunteered, he picked my name, and I don't remember how it call worked out but by the end of '62 there was a small group of students who were out of New York, (inaudible)

Q All of them?

A No, not all of them, but I don't quite know, Ralph Allen from Trinity College. Now, I can't remember whether Jack came, whether (inaudible) came right then or a little later or the next summer (inaudible) but the women -- there were a number of men, white and black and the women were myself, Kathleen Conwell, who was black and (inaudible) who was, well she was black. She was very, very light skinned, multi-racial person with blue eyes and light hair, many struggled to figure out who she was. But she counted as black, and me. And originally, there was I think another one or two (inaudible)

And, I was eighteen and --

Q What did your parents say?

A Well, they were essentially very supportive, I think. They worried but, you know, I have actually, you know, in retrospect I think they probably didn't worry enough (inaudible) for a while any way. And I didn't, really, either, to tell you the truth. In fact, you know, I feel like I was really extraordinary and there were efforts to orient us before we went and (inaudible) and that was (inaudible) and (inaudible) but, I still feel like I went with, you know, just essentially quite ignorant and relying mostly on my, just, you know, my ability to relate to people who (inaudible) which I was, I think, fairly good at, probably because I had grown up in all different cultures. So we went to Albany and I spent basically a year and a half there. I was up north for a couple of months after I left Albany, which would have been in the Fall of '63, in mid to Fall of '63. And I worked in the city and then for a brief period I worked out in a rural county called Lee County, but it became evident that it was too dangerous.

Q (inaudible)?

A No, I don't think so. But, I'm not, you know, I don't totally know. I really don't totally remember what I was doing. We were organizing, trying to get people to come from mass meetings to meetings. At that point, in the city of Albany there was this large entity called the Albany movement which was a really powerful entity at that point. And really thousands of the black community were involved in it. And they were, there, the range of issues that they were involved in ranged from desegregating public accommodations to desegregating the schools

to voter registration to, you know -- what we were actually organizing people to do out of the rural areas I'm not entirely sure. And I didn't stay out there very long. And in the city, in Albany, I did a fair amount of office work. But, I also do very clearly remember going from, you know, (inaudible) with another woman generally (inaudible) we'd get people to come to meetings, to get them to register to vote, to get them to do whatever is going on. I think I have a clearer memory of Mississippi. I don't know quite why that is. I think partly because it's more documented (inaudible)

So, I stayed there up north and working in the New York SNCC office for several months and then went to Jackson, Mississippi in the winter of '64, so that was probably in January and I went to work in the Jackson office to work on (inaudible)

And then I spent the summer of '63 in Greenwood, office work primarily. And then I spent from September of '64 to August of '65 in a small town called Statesville in northern Mississippi (inaudible) working on that project and for that year I really worked (inaudible). I did office work but I also did a lot of work in the community, primarily voter registration and (inaudible).

Q You went back to school?

A I went home, I don't know where I went. I left with a young man named Chris Williams, who had been (inaudible), who actually now, I married him, he's now my ex-husband, the father of one of my children. But he actually worked (inaudible)

Q Oh, really?

A (inaudible) His name is Chris Williams

Q Oh, (inaudible) yeah, I was going to talk to him because one of my professors met him this summer and she said, you know, you're not going to believe this but there's this, because she (inaudible)

A He said he was going to volunteer this summer of '64 and was there for a year and we left together and we went to California.

Q Okay. So, when you were (inaudible) what was the, can you talk about the attitude of some of the SNCC staff members toward that whole idea and then when it actually did occur?

A Well, there was always very serious questions. Most of the, many of the black staff, I mean at that point I would say that the whole SNCC staff was -- there might have been 60 or 80 staff spread out across the south at that point and a whole bunch of them were in Mississippi. So, there was, I think, first of all, there was an issue among staff people who were not working in the Mississippi about all of the focus and all of the resource and support in Mississippi and that was an issue on its own. But, yeah, I think that maybe there were very close to a large number of white people, as long as we were a small number of white people, we weren't really much of an issue. (inaudible) and, I'm extremely, extremely grateful that I came early. I was not (inaudible)

I think, although some people took positives away from us too, people had very (inaudible)

But, my experience at coming so early when I first came, I was truly welcome. (inaudible) and that made it all the more excruciating (inaudible) but it did give me those two years. So, your question was what was going on (inaudible) a lot of conflict, a lot of doubt. Folks will say, they talk about that there were several votes within staff meetings and I couldn't tell you what was the truth with all of that. You know, I think that what (inaudible) says today, is that you know he and, obviously there were some other people in support of this, so, but there were just one too many deaths of black people that, as a result of it, not as a result of the summer project, but as a result of the Freedom Movement (inaudible) in Mississippi. I mean, there was just death after death after death primarily of black men.

Q     Lynchings?

A     Lynchings, yes. Lynching. But, of, always of black men who didn't particularly have contact with the civil rights movement organizing, but very specific people who were a part of the Mississippi civil rights movement. You know Medgar Evers is the most well known (inaudible). And, I think that Bob, for one, could not tolerate his responsibility or feeling (inaudible) he felt like the way to break it open was to bring in the white people (inaudible), just to get national attention, that just doing it, trying to get national attention for black people was not going to work. (End of Tape one, Side one)

And there were clearly people in the organization who agreed with him, but there were many people who thought that the cost of doing this was going to be higher than the benefit and I guess, you

know, that's what it came down to. The people who in the end, carried the day and although you could never say that any one person sort of imposed something on the group at that particular group, Bob swung enough moral weight so that he could carry people with him into (inaudible). And, you know, I think that my feeling, I think that my feeling about it was that I basically supported the tradition for what it was worth doing. You know, the truth is I think that the summer project served it's purpose. White people got killed. Attention was focused and certain things really did begin to change because of it. The cost to SNCC as an organization, you know, it really blew us apart, although, can never say that it's any one thing. And, it was --

Q So, was there not much contact between the permanent staff members and is summer people?

A You mean during the summer?

Q During the summer, was there actually was that because of the actual contact with them or was (inaudible)

A There was resentment and, particularly among the black staff, many of the black staff, that so many white people were coming at all. I think that those of us who were white staff, I mean, but I would not -- everybody was an individual, so you had a whole range between black staff and white staff. Among white staff, what I'm aware of was that some of us were aware that our position with the movement was changing and we were also being affected by all of these feelings that were surfacing. So, some of us were probably more opposed than others to having it happen at all. For that reason, (inaudible) So, but, when you had

people coming to an orientation session, what -- you had a SNCC staff, I mean I found descriptions that I wrote and talked about shortly there, you know, '65 and '66 and my experience of us then was that we were angry and bitter and totally blown away by the summer project we were trying to run and a lot of hostile feelings toward the white students. But, on the other hand, I also know people who were volunteers at the same orientation session whose experience of it was very different. So, it's not, I was comforted by that to find that it wasn't a total disaster. And, so, then what you had in many communities across Mississippi, were projects that had maybe 15, 20 people all together, some in Freedom (inaudible), some in community center, some in voter registration, you might, out of that 20 people, you might have five who were black, including the project director and some number of the local Mississippi folks who were strict SNCC staff. I mean, one of the strengths of the Mississippi staff was that many, many people on the Mississippi staff actually came out of these small Mississippi towns. And, then, you had all those white volunteers. And I think that, and some of the white volunteers were quite arrogant and sure of themselves and conveyed that and made things more difficult and others weren't and some managed, probably, to do some good work despite everything and probably managed to make some connections to black staff members, too.

Q Yeah, I heard a lot of that sort of resentment during that time was because of interracial relationships. What do you think about it? I mean --

A Was it? You mean, did it happen? There were tons of interracial relationships. I mean, this was true for us from the very beginning.

Q Just a lot of sex in general?

A She's right, she's right absolutely right. And, I think I begin to look at that as part of, you know, a significant piece of what was going on. I mean, when you think in 1961, this was very taboo stuff, particularly between black men and white women. And I think that lots and lots of black men and white women took part in breaking that taboo. Plus, we were all young and in danger and freaked out and, you know, so it was going to happen. Now, it's a very difficult subject to talk about and actually, it was, you know, when, I mean people have interviewed me and I haven't really said a whole lot about it. I think I feel, personally, much more willing to talk about it at this point, I'm not at all sure what I want published. And I don't know what of it you want to know. So, can you ask me, specifically?

Q Yeah. I mean, I just, I think it's really sort of important just what was. I think it explains a lot of what was going on in people's heads, not, obviously, I don't want details or anything, but did you find that these relationships were more resented by black women especially?

A Yeah, well, I think so. I mean one of my regrets, my personal regrets actually is that I was so ignorant of the effect. My being in a relationship with a black man was having an effect on my fellow black women staff members. I'm not sure I would have



changed what I would have done but I would have wished to have been more aware.

Q But, did they make --

A Did they --

Q (inaudible)

A Well, yeah. I mean, I think that that's what I learned eventually that some women on the staff became very hostile and were quite clear about it. Others never said it at all.

Q Because of selfish reasons or because they didn't think it was the right thing to do just black and white relationships at all?

A Well, I don't want to speak for everyone. But the difficulty is that I don't know that many of them will talk about it honestly because mostly with the black SNCC staff so far, the women have said is that this was not a factor in how they felt about white people in the movement or about white women and this is not a factor and we are embracing nationalism or, you know. And I don't really think that that's the truth. I don't think it's the whole story. I mean, really, I almost always think that there are many pieces to one, you know, to how things go and what happens. But, my own experience, I think my whole, my experience in general was so much more positive than other white women because I came early. First of all, in the very early days, there was, I think there was literally an embracing of one another that really, I think, we just broke down a lot of that awful stuff and that was true between black women and white women too. And the interracial relationships between black women and white men on the

staff also, which had their own kind of taboo later on because there was the whole horrible history of black women being raped by white men. But, in that early period, everybody, there were just interracial relationships going on all over the place.

Q Were most interracial relationships not permanent things? I mean it seems to me that there was so much of that forever changing partners.

A Well, I don't know. Well, we were probably fortunate that there wasn't AIDS going on. But, I think that each of us would have a different story, and some of us had lots of relationships and some of us. And, I could, in the three years, well, actually only two because the third year I was involved with my husband, ex-husband, Chris. In those two years, there were three significant men in my life and of those, there was one that (inaudible) so it wasn't lots and lots.

Q I just think it would be hard going off to different places?

A Well, it was very hard. It was tremendously hard. There was the situation where, you know, we would be together for some given reason for a couple of months in one place and then the person would be sent off or you would go somewhere else. There was this enormous danger factor that we weren't going to see each other again, and that became very real. I mean I needed rest after a while. So that made for huge intensity. It also made for very screwed up relationships. And, in no time, given the danger, the stress, the work that we were doing constantly and all the

racial issues among us, you know, for there to be anything that approached a healthy relationship --

Q Plus the fact that it didn't last long.

A Yeah. I think that there were few people who came out of it with relationships that lasted. Most, you know, most of -- I mean I came out of it with relationships that haunted me for years. And, you know, only now, really actually seem to (inaudible) including the men (inaudible)

But, yeah, there were lots of relationships in the beginning, I'd say the first year or year and a half that I was there (inaudible) when I got there, I think I did say this, one reason I didn't perceive a lot of resentment or didn't understand it very well at that point was because there probably wasn't as much. And, then by the time I got to Mississippi, which would have been the beginning of '64, then the feelings of certain women on the staff became much clearer to me what was going on. And, from then on out, by the time you got into the summer, among black SNCC staff male and female, it was not -- no longer acceptable to have relationships with white people. And that doesn't mean that people didn't. What happened was that then in this stretch of time in which, I think, a lot of women were exploited, a lot of women, white women particularly. But, looking at it also, you know, I mean the black men were also (inaudible). What happened was that people conducted their lives in public, same race sexual relationships, and then there was all this stuff that went on that was hidden (inaudible) I, you know, took part in that. I had a

relationship that went essentially from one that had been perfectly public and then we had broken up and I (inaudible)

Q Because there was so much pressure?

A Yeah, yeah. There was something called "backsliding" (inaudible) black people on the staff to get involved with whites.

Q Do you think that pressure -- where was that pressure coming from?

A Among (inaudible), among themselves. There was a growing desire to be with themselves.

Q Do you think that changed happenings as a direct result of all the students coming in?

A Well, I, you know, you don't know because that's what happened. I don't know what would have happened if we hadn't have done that, we might have all been massacred. It (inaudible) that happened so fast. Then there was all this stuff going on everywhere else in the, you know, there's a whole historical movement going on in the country. There's Malcolm X preaching in Harlem and there's Africa. So, you can't -- although I think I wouldn't, you know, I wouldn't make a -- I would guess that a period of extreme nationalism was probably inevitable, historically and how you would expect us, I mean, I don't now expect that we could overcome 400 years, black or white, any of us. So, we lived out some of it. We broke some of it down and then we dealt with it or didn't deal with it or failed to deal with it. I think it probably happened faster because there was this massive influx of other people that basically (inaudible)

when this were just a few of us, we certainly didn't present (inaudible)

Q So, were you present at the (inaudible) after this?

A I have to tell you that my memories are vague. I know I remember sitting in the church or something that looked like a church and there were papers being presented and I remember somebody reading this feminist stuff and, I remember liking it and responding to it. I remember it being (inaudible) I'm told that I came back to the project in Batesville (inaudible) and Cathy (inaudible) tells me this because she was there and she was somebody who was a feminist when she came. She came from a really, very politically conscious family and came down there really already a feminist. I certainly wasn't. I was just getting my eyes opened and hearing things (inaudible) women were outraged and couldn't understand why she didn't take his name. (inaudible) so. But any way, Cathy said that I came back to the project really excited about people who, you know, about these women who had written something about how women should not be confined (inaudible) and whatever else was in that document. I don't remember that particular (inaudible) what I know, my experience on the Batesville project was that although there was, there were so many limitations for white women because of the safety issues that we represented to the black staff that made our presence visible. But, that really always created these limitations on what we could do. But I actually ended up doing a lot of traveling around that county with my ex-husband, Chris, who didn't (inaudible) even then, you know, did not particularly think

that women belonged doing the housework and cleaning he was perfectly willing to have me be his partner and I was a very experienced person at that point. So, we did a lot of traveling together even though we were both white, we were so well known in the black community (inaudible)

Q But, before you had done a lot of office work?

A Before, I had done a lot of office work, yeah.

Q Do you think it was mainly because of the visibility you got or the safety factor?

A Well, I think that that's a whole piece of it. And, I think that when you talk to black women, most of them will tell you that, and I don't think that they were lying, that their experience was that they got to do everything in that movement and in that organization and that they swung lots of (inaudible) and, I think that within SNCC and also within the Civil Rights movement that black women had much more power and influence than SDS women. So, and my experience really, if I, I would still say, I mean, if somebody interviewed me five years ago I said this and I would still say it even though I sort of have now, I have a clearer sense of the ways in which there is oppression, generally I still think that I got to do more in that organization in that movement than I've ever, as a young women in almost any other (inaudible) and it was extraordinary. And I learned to do things that, you know, I mean skills and just ways of doing everything, that I carry with me right up to this day, use all the time. Just the knowledge that I know what I did then makes me be able to do things now.

Q Have you, I mean, just from SDS, do you, did you see any correspondence or any --

A What was my connection with SDS?

Q Yeah, and the SNCC, how you think, you personally as a SNCC staff member viewed people in SDS?

A Well, I had (inaudible) I certainly had contact with a number of people who were members and heavily involved in that group (inaudible) and, I can't think of all their names now, but starting with (inaudible) Finegold, who was (inaudible) so, I always had the connection with those people and some vague awareness that they went off to do their SDS work (inaudible). SNCC in the early days also had a lot of crossing back and forth, a connection, conversation and then certain people like Casey (inaudible) moving from one group to the other. So, there were a lot of blanks and I, you know, generally positive feeling. And then I suspect that many of the volunteers became more (inaudible) I, personally, was not ever as drawn to working for SDS because I was just (inaudible) taken by the (inaudible) the community, their movement, the way in which I was welcomed into it. And, I also, I'm certainly smart, but I've never been intellectual in a way many of SDS students were, you know, and they get a lot more analytical discussion and I'm still not very good at that. Back then I really wasn't very good at it and I was really much more interested in just taking action. SNCC was more clear, at that time, in any case, was just doing things. (inaudible)

Q Well, did you -- when you were on staff, did you expect -- did you have -- when you were in the offices, did you have an actual title or what were you involved in?

A No, I was, whatever I did in the office was always sort of part of being a SNCC field secretary, which was (inaudible) except in the Jackson office I was -- or in Albany, I guess I was involved (inaudible) but I went out into the community too. So I was just a, you know, SNCC worker and later on I became to be the title of field secretary. But, I was never specifically connected to a department or anything except when there was time to work on the summer project. That's really what I did a lot of work on, in those months leading up to it. First me and then a black woman named Margaret Birnham came south and we worked together.

Q Did you know, did you do any of the writing of -- just, I'm just wondering if it was mostly men that did the writing of the pamphlets or the speeches or anything like that, anything that would be given in public somehow?

A I didn't primarily. Whatever I was writing, I mean I may have been writing fund raising letters and I did some writing of relatively short things describing, you know, the summer projects (inaudible). The pamphlet, no, I didn't do that, but I don't have, but this is an impression. I don't know the facts of who did what. But I have never had the impression that the men, I mean they tended write their own speeches if they were making speeches and more men made speeches than women, there's no question about it. But the people who wrote the pamphlet, the



people who wrote the publicity were just as actively women as men (inaudible) so.

Q So, how were you -- when you left, had SNCC already sort of broken down? Were you being sort of pushed out of the organization?

A Yeah, the level of hostility against the white people kind of ended SNCC. And at that point, by that time, it was really very, very hard. Sometimes if you were at conferences, staff meetings or even within a project, it would take the form of overt public attacks on white people but most, I think, really what happened, what I experienced the most is that people just stopped talking.

(End of tape two, side two)

(inaudible) just essentially cut themselves off from us and from me. That was -- that became excruciating. I don't remember, I did write a letter of resignation (inaudible) I basically stayed out, I mean I was basically tied in with a group of people who (inaudible) there was a lot to be said for, you know, my reasons (inaudible) and I could not stand to stay in the other (inaudible)

Q (inaudible) community that you were a part of.

A Yeah, well after I said that, I thought well, so you really cared about what went on and if you really wanted to make change why aren't you able to stay and keep working in one way or the other.

Q (inaudible)

A No, but there are people you talk with because, not that I (inaudible) but I do have a lot of respect for the fact that she has come in and still is doing work that relates to racial issues and (inaudible)

But, all along, she's done it and there's been a high cost, she probably talked about that too. But, I, you know, I couldn't do it.

Q Did you ever -- what did you think about the idea of (inaudible)?

A Well, at the time it was a wonderful idea. On the other hand, it was a very difficult thing to do (inaudible) and if you weren't southern, even if you were, too, I mean, you know, Dorothy and Casey were southern. People (inaudible) in Connecticut was one of the founding members of the seven students organizing. (inaudible)

I thought about it, I didn't know how to begin to deal with it, the reality of what I had done, (inaudible)

But, then the last seven years have been (inaudible) and I work, my clients are young white women, poor, hopeless, totally abused. And, they're all white, you know and I think well, okay (inaudible)

although, I think that what I do is valuable, I have yet to figure out how to make social change in this community because these people are, I mean, they're all poor people and very poor generations of people who are very poor and massive substance abuse and all sorts of violence in the whole community. They know each other but they (inaudible) support each other (inaudible) there's nothing like a black rural community. I don't know what the poor white southern people, whether there is a community of poor white southernists or not I think it's probably much less cohesive than black community.

Q How are you trying to get, how are you trying to organize them?

A Well, I'm not. I don't know how to do it. I work with women wanting to learn or small groups, with pregnant teens and probably the most valuable thing that I found that I do is that when I get them together in a group and we're working and they, the purpose originally for getting them together as a group was that to get a network of young women willing to go the schools and talk about their experience as poor young parents. Basically, we're trying to discourage kids from getting pregnant. What's come out of it is this really strong group of young women that sort of have a (inaudible) that provides support for each other in the community for each other that they never had. So, that was as far as I've gotten. But, you know, it's not a social movement where one person (inaudible) there are other people like me, you know, working in social services (inaudible). So, I mean, I take what I learned there.

Q I'm trying to figure out what I'm doing next year, so I'm interested in what other people have done. Dorothy figured out my whole life for me.

A Oh, she would, so what did she tell you?

Q She told me that I should go work for a nonprofit organization. She doesn't know where. She said, go out west, go out west, work for a nonprofit organization for two years and then go to graduate school. I said what should I do in graduate school? She said, well, I don't know. I mean, I definitely do want to go to a graduate school, but I don't know exactly for what yet.

A Are you a senior?

Q My entire school is (inaudible) New York City, (inaudible) so I was thinking about going to graduate school for history but I don't know if I want to be a professor. I want to do something instead of (inaudible) maybe I'll go back to this, but, (inaudible) studying what other people have been doing for a long time now. So, I'm just --

A Is there anything that really draws you? I mean, clearly something to do with racial issues.

Q Yeah, but I don't even know where to start. I think I would enjoy doing something, I talked to a multi-cultural director about this a lot and I'm involved in a community building project at Williams to increase racial awareness and things like that and not very interesting. It's just sort of jobs like that you (inaudible) multi cultural center (inaudible) or something like

that are basically are (inaudible) there's nothing wrong with that but --

A It does rather leave you out of it.

Q To a lesser degree it's sort of the same thing. There's always things that I think that would be great to do something like this, but I just don't know where to go.

A Yeah. Unlike Dorothy, I don't have, you know -- I had two children who wanted to, particularly my son who is now 24, has been trying to figure this out (inaudible) he presently works, lives in Baltimore and he works for Maryland food committee (inaudible) and they are known (inaudible) promoting independence and food issues, nutrition issues for poor people in Baltimore and outside of Baltimore. So, they are involved in (inaudible) His -- the way he got there was because he got involved, he went to New Hampshire and got involved in community garden in New Hampshire and helped organize a community garden (inaudible) and he, now he's just in the process of interviewing for a job as a political organizer for the (inaudible) which is a multi-racial organization. There's some prospect that he may actually get this job and be doing some sort of political organizing in a whole range of communities in Baltimore. So, he, he's trying to sort all this out too. And it's a very mixed experience for him and sometimes it seems that there's a lot of space for young people who are not minorities and other times it seems like there isn't. And, if anything, I would say it might be at a -- it could go either way, either direction at this point. There's a mass of

very poor, desperate and angry people in the ghettos and their energy is getting, once again (inaudible)

And, then, there is what you're talking about, this incredible array of mixed young people and some of them want (inaudible) minorities involved in it who are trying to do stuff.

Q See, I don't think there's anything wrong with organizing among your own people, your own race, but -- I don't think there's anything wrong with that but it doesn't really leave a place for me to help.

A Well, what do you do in your community?

Q (inaudible)

A But, I don't know that there isn't a place for you.

Q Yeah, it's just a matter of finding it.

A Yeah. I'm really curious about that. Betty Garman, another white women, if you do talk to her at any point in time, she recently went to organize (inaudible) in the state of Washington and got all these young people your age doing really wonderful work and her experience was that there was such a mixture of a very multi-racial group and very inclusive efforts going on (inaudible)

Q Someone was telling me that Connie Curry is involved somewhat in something like that too.

A I don't know what she's doing right now, but she's coming to Connecticut also.

Q I talked to her (inaudible) one of her friends just died. She was real upset. I think I'm going to talk to her on the

phone. Last week -- I've been going everywhere but, I was trying to get as many people in as (inaudible)

A (inaudible)

Q A lot of them (inaudible)

A If you want, I can give you my son's name and phone number. At some point in your life, if you feel you'd like to talk to him.

Q Yeah, (inaudible) that would be great.

A He's just a few years ahead but I think he probably has some information to offer.

Q (inaudible)

A (inaudible) it doesn't do that for everybody.

Q Right, I've heard a lot of good things about it.

End of tape