NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Civil Rights History Project


Myrtle Gonza Glascoe oral history interview

conducted by Dwandalyn Reece

in Capitol Heights, Maryland, Nov. 17, 2010
INTERVIEWER: Today is Wednesday, November 17th, 2010. And I am sitting with Dr. Myrtle Gonza Glascoe [phonetic] for an oral history interview on her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Glascoe, you were born and raised in Washington D.C., can you tell me about some of the early instances in your life that contributed to your involvement in the movement?

DR. GLASCOE: Right off the top of my head it's hard to think of things that may have contributed to me going into the movement. My family wasn't very political. I honestly don't—it's hard to think of anything. But I was always, as my Godmother would say, I was always too frank. Whatever I thought I said and I had to learn how to not do that, you know, because if I saw things and they were not right I made it clear that I did not agree and so. But
right now I don't think of anything from my childhood that led to me
coming into the movement.

INTERVIEWER: So even as a child you were pretty honest and straight
forward?

DR. GLASCOE: Oh I was very honest, yeah. And I was also get up and go
because my brother and my sister used to make jokes about me, they would
say she always has money. And you know we had to bargain with my dad to
get money and so—he didn't give us an allowance but I would go to the
grocery store and I would carry orders, I would take groceries for
people to their house for a quarter. And then when I got to where I had a
bicycle I would do that too, I would put the groceries on the bicycle and
take them for a quarter. That's the reason they said I always had money
because I would make a little money.

Then sometimes I would come to my father and I would say, well you know
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<td>I want to go to the carnival. The carnival came to D.C. I think once a year and I would tell my dad I want to go to the carnival and then I would tell him—I said what I need is six dollars to go to the carnival but I already have three so all you have to do is give me three, so he was willing to do that.</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: Well it sounds like you were straight forward, you said what you wanted and you were able to negotiate—</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Exactly.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: --what you got. So you take kind of that straight forward nature, you graduated from two of the finest African American educational institutions in the country, Dunbar High School and Howard University.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DR. GLASCOE: Yes.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: Were there instances at Dunbar or Howard that inspired you to become involved in the struggle for civil rights?</td>
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DR. GLASCOE: I don't think of any in particular. Let me see at Dunbar, no
I don't think of any. But you know the thing that interests me about
that is people, especially my classmates at Dunbar, when they see
me, when we go to our reunions and stuff they always tell me that I always had something going. I was always making fun or doing stuff that was kind of not quite acceptable.
INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm.
DR. GLASCOE: But anyway I don't remember anything at Dunbar. Let me
see at Dunbar—
INTERVIEWER: Were there any clubs or organizations or were there discussions amongst students about civil rights issues?
DR. GLASCOE: No. And at the time I just—I wasn’t into that stuff, I was just going to school.
INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm.
DR. GLASCOE: And I was going to school and I wasn’t doing my best, I
was just going to school and I was getting by. But I mean I remember my English class I enjoyed that. And I remember one occasion where I knew that this young man had— and I read the Esquire magazine and I read—my father used to get a whole lot of stuff, you know the Life magazine, he got all three newspapers and I read it all. And so this particular classmate of mine, we had to write an essay and so he read his essay and I recognized it as an essay I had read in the Esquire magazine and so I told the teacher about that. And so— but anyway. I don't think that particularly speaks to me being involved in the movement.

INTERVIEWER: What about your time at Howard. So many people talk about college as an opportunity to kind of expand their horizons and whether it's through activities or courses, can you pick a moment where there's certain things that really attracted
you and kind of sparked your imagination in the moment?

DR. GLASCOE: In relationship to the movement?

INTERVIEWER: In relationship to the movement or also anything because you never know what kind of spurs you along.

DR. GLASCOE: I hate to say it.

INTERVIEWER: Nothing particular?

DR. GLASCOE: I went to school and I partied.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So you were living the young college experience.

DR. GLASCOE: Exactly, yeah. I mean—and I didn't realize at the time how good of student I was. I had this great facility for going to class and taking notes and reading my notes before an exam and getting an excellent grade.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm.

DR. GLASCOE: And so in these years people have said to me how smart I was and how they like to be in class
But anyway there was nothing political going on in my life and I think about it a lot that there was so much political going on in the city that I knew nothing about but anyway. I'm trying to remember.

INTERVIEWER: So what happened after college, what did you do next?

DR. GLASCOE: I took a teaching position at a Catholic high school in—right after college I took a—see I was a health and physical education major.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DR. GLASCOE: I took a teaching position right after college at a boarding school for young black woman and that might have fired me up because I was aware of how discriminatory the nuns were to our young girls. And they had these strict rules and regulations, they wouldn't let the girls dance or if they did let them dance they screened
all their records. And the records that the girls really wanted to dance to they couldn't dance to those. And so I was a health and physical education teacher and one of my phys ed sessions was devoted to dancing and I saw to it that the records that the girls wanted to dance to they got to dance to those records. And of course that probably added to the fact that there was some other things that happened and they asked me to leave before the end of the year. I had a young lady to ask me one day in class could she get pregnant by kissing and so I stopped the class and I diagramed how she could get pregnant.

INTERVIEWER: And they didn't like that?

DR. GLASCOE: No, not at all. And so anyway they didn't get rid of me right away but I also was expected to go to mass and I would go to mass but I couldn't handle it and so I stopped
going to mass. And then one day I was sitting in my room and I was knitting, I took up knitting while I was there because it was an isolated place and my room was way up on the top of this castle like building. And I was knitting and a knock came on the door, it was the Mother Superior and the principal of the school and they both said to me they had prayed for me and prayed for me and prayed for me. And they had come to this unfortunate conclusion that I had to go and they said you have to go by tonight. And so I then said to them well this money that I'm making here is scheduled for me to go back to graduate school and if you cut me off now I won't be able to do that. And so by the time I finished they agreed to pay me for the rest of the year, just leave.
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<td>the movement. But I think to the fact that I was feeling oppressed and</td>
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<td>frustrated and angry and whatever.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: So after that first job was there a point where you had an</td>
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<td>awakening or consciousness that you wanted to become more involved?</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Well it was a few years later I had—I went back to school of</td>
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<td>social work in 1958, I took my degree at the University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>School of Social Work in 1960. And I was working at the Rosewood State</td>
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<td>Hospital outside of Baltimore as a social worker, you know I did social</td>
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<td>group work and social case work with the families of the children that I</td>
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<td>served. And one day I was at lunch and one of my co-workers says to me</td>
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<td>why don't you come down to the meeting tonight, I said what meeting, he</td>
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<td>said—he was the chairman of Baltimore CORE. And so he invited me to come</td>
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<td>to the meeting and I went to the meeting and I got involved. And</td>
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so I didn't believe in picketing and
so I refused—because I didn’t believe in non-violence so I refused
to walk the picket line. But I would come and I would do all kinds of
things behind the scenes, I would drive people places, I would do
support work and all kinds of stuff like that but I just wouldn't walk the picket line. And so one day they said to me come on and go with us,
we're going to sit in and I said sit in where, they said they were going
to the White Coffee Pot and that was one of the places that we were not allowed to go. And so I went with them to the White Coffee Pot and as soon as we sat down there was this guy who got up and the guy came to us, he had grease on him it seemed like from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, dirty apron, greasy hair and he read this thing to us which said we had to get up and go. And so the intention was that we
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<td>would get up and go and so we got up and we left. And I was so mad, I</td>
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<td>could feel that anger all the way</td>
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<td>home, I could feel the anger. And I</td>
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<td>just–anyway it was like a rod of steel was put up my back and I can't</td>
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<td>even describe how I felt, it was that burn that turned me on. And so from</td>
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<td>that point on I got involved in picketing and I never got arrested</td>
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<td>but you know we were doing Route 40 things at that time. And the Route</td>
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<td>40 demonstrations and people–you know what I was surprised to learn once I</td>
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<td>got involved was that when someone was going to go to jail they made a decision to go to jail, to actually</td>
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<td>go and do what they were not supposed to do and refuse to remove</td>
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<td>themselves. Like if we had wanted to go to jail that day we would have not gotten up and left the restaurant and</td>
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<td>then the police would have come and arrested us. As a matter of fact</td>
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<td>there were five police outside</td>
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INTERVIEWER: We were talking about how it was deliberate—

DR. GLASCOE: Yeah. So anyway I had not known that. So whenever we would go to different places where we were planning to sit in on Route 40 then there would be certain people who had come and they had brought their toothbrush and whatever they thought they needed to spend the night in jail. And so I never would agree to that, I didn't want to be in jail, I didn't want to be arrested but I would go and do other—I would support that, I would picket, when it was time to get arrested I would leave with a whole lot of—there were other people that would leave too. So that was my introduction to the movement. And in that process I remember going over to Howard and picking up folks like Courtland Cox and driving them to stuff we were doing on Route 40,
and Bill Mahoney, you're probably not familiar with those names. But I remember going up there and picking them up. You know it was about these are the youth and they need support to get where they're going and that kind of stuff. Because I was still a professional social worker and I saw myself a little bit back from the circle of civil rights workers.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DR. GLASCOE: And so anyway.

INTERVIEWER: I mean it seems like there was an evolution in the levels of your involvement. And I just wanted to go back to something that you had said first when you didn't want to picket and you didn't believe in non-violence. Can you kind of explain what you meant by that? And then you get to the point where you do want to picket and then there's certain levels, was it part of your attitude evolving or--?

DR. GLASCOE: It didn't make any
sense to me to have people beating on you and you didn't—and you couldn't respond to that in a like manner. And I had not attended any sessions where you were taught about non-violence. I had no knowledge of the philosophical approach to non-violence and so that was my gut level response to it. And when to work at CORE—went to work with Baltimore CORE I took those understandings with me. But as I said once I—I mean I got so angry that this greasy uneducated person would come and stand there and tell me I wasn't as good as he was, get out my face, I will knock you down. INTERVIEWER: So it sounds like to me it's more than just joining up, it's understand the philosophy and the rationale that it wasn't just a mass of people coming together, that it was deliberate, it was planned, there was strategies— DR. GLASCOE: Exactly.
INTERVIEWER: And as you got more involved, you—

DR. GLASCOE: [interposing] And I came to understand—

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DR. GLASCOE: --I could participate but that's my way. If I don't understand I can't do it. And things I don’t—you know some things in life I've had to come to say to myself well you're not going to understand it, you're still going to have to accept it, it's there for you. It's for you and you need it but even though you don't understand it. And I'm talking about things spiritual right now, you know there's so many things that we don’t understand but they happen and we're surrounded by those things. And it's to our benefit to choose to make ourselves available to those things, to open ourselves to receive on that level, yes.

INTERVIEWER: How did you come to
make your way South to participate in the Freedom Movement?

DR. GLASCOE: Well I left Baltimore in the summer of 1962 to take a position in Los Angeles, California working with emotionally disturb delinquency prone youth. And when I got to Los Angeles I reconnected with CORE and I continued to attend CORE meetings and like that. What was the question you asked me?

INTERVIEWER: How you ended up making your way South.

DR. GLASCOE: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: So you went from Baltimore to L.A.

DR. GLASCOE: I went from Baltimore to L.A. and then as part of my work— you know as a result of being connected with Baltimore CORE I came in contact with Frederica Teer [phonetic] who was a national officer for CORE. And she would come down to Baltimore sometimes and we became good friends. And so once I was in
Los Angeles and she was living in San Francisco and so I went up to visit her one time and she introduced me to Mike Miller who was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee chair of the support group there. And so I met him and I like that area and so when I completed my—I had a temporary job in Los Angeles, so when that job was over I moved to San Francisco and I began working with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee support network there. And so right now were in early 1964 and so I went up there and so I was in San Francisco during the summer of 1964. And Mike would go down—Mike was in the South and he brought all kinds of stuff back for me to read. And so in effect—I mean it's almost as if he had a plan to educate me, I don't know that he did, but all the stuff that he brought back, he brought back lots of papers and all those things and I read, it was like
I was eating dinner every day, I was reading so much, I enjoyed it. And I got to understand what people were trying to do in the South. And then from time to time somebody would come out and so I got to meet lots of people, I got to meet Larry—Lawrence Guyot and Ivanhoe Donaldson and Mrs. Hamer. One time we had a workshop and Mrs. Hamer came and I had to drive her around in my car and I was so excited, I was just thrilled. And she was just as down to earth as she could be. As soon we got away from all the folks she pulled out her tobacco and she stuck it in her mouth and she says, "Now I can get me a good chew." Anyway. And so that spring I was on a committee to choose people to go South and so I'm still not at the point yet where I have released my professional social work stuff, I'm still working as a social worker. And so I'm on this committee—and you see the thing that
happened was that during the summer
of 1964 so many young white people
went down and many of them did not
want to leave and so there was a lot
of concern about who came—who would
come down for the '65 summer and how
would decisions be made to try to get
more people who would fit in better
with the way things were. And so I
was on a committee to help to choose
those people and in the midst of all
that I decided I was going to go.

And actually my decision was
facilitated by this young Chinese
woman who worked in the office with
me and she had been traveling in
Europe with her husband and I think
two children. And her husband died
and there she was no husband and the
two children. And so she had to come
back and she had to pick her life up
and keep going. And so she and I got
into this conversation, I was telling
her how much I was attracted to being
a part of the movement. And so she
just looked at me and she says, well

why can't you go? I started thinking

about all the reasons I couldn't go

and she says do you have any bills?

No I don't. Do you have a husband?

No I don't. Do you have any

children? No I don't. And so then

she says there's no reason that you

can't go, so I just stopped right

then and I said okay you can go. And

so that's how I did it. And I signed

myself up to go.

INTERVIEWER: After signing everyone

else up.

DR. GLASCOE: Yeah, so anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Many people, and I

think you eluded to this, who were

born or grew up in the North have

shared that they went to the South

with the intention of only staying

for a short time and then ended up

staying for a long time. Did you

have a plan for how long you were

making the trip?

DR. GLASCOE: Initially I went as a
volunteer for the summer. I think back inside myself I knew that I was going to want to be there more than one summer but that wasn’t up front in my mind. I got there and I got involved in the work and I wanted to—and I stayed beyond the summer. Because you know I had—we have cousins who lived in southern Maryland and we would go to visit our cousins. And when I was a teenager we would go there and I would have a great time when I was with my cousins in southern Maryland. We would go to joints and we would dance and we would have a good time. And so I found quite a lot of the same kind of the thing in the South. You know in Arkansas after we worked ourselves to death then we would go this—it wasn’t the Hall, the Hall was the place you know where my cousins lived. But we would go to this I think VFW hall and we would dance and we would have a nice time, we would enjoy. But
that's not the reason I stayed, I got involved, I loved it, I really did, I loved the work.

INTERVIEWER: Can we talk a little bit—obviously your work started long before you went South. I mean getting involved in Pennsylvania and then moving out west. When you made it down south what were some of your first responsibilities, what did you get involved in?

DR. GLASCOE: I was the Director of the Freedom School in West Helena, Arkansas. And it was truly the result of the fact that I had worked in summer camps for many years as a camper and as a director. And so what I did in so many words was set up a day camp in West Helena, Arkansas for those children there and we did a lot of different kinds of activities. And of course an important part of that was discussing with them what was going on in their communities and facilitating for them...
opportunities to express themselves and to write poetry if that was what they desired and stuff like that. And so that was the first thing I did. And the most important part of that summer for me was the guidance that I received from the workers who were there. Because one of the things they said to me, and as a matter of fact Mike had said the same thing to me before I got in the South, that I needed to pay attention to what was going on around me, that I didn’t need to get involved right away, you know thinking that I had something to offer or to lead or to guide. That it was important for me to watch and listen and learn. And as a matter of fact the director of the project in West Helena told me go to community meetings but do not get up and tell people what you think, stay in your seat. If you have to write down what you think and we can talk about it later. And so that was
the most important experience for me that summer. Of course I did voter registration, there were nine of us volunteers that summer and there were two of us who were black. And we did voter registration, we did—I did the Freedom School, we attended community meetings in different parts of the county. And I learned how to go places and just be there and gradually get acquainted with people, people knew who I was and I would go places and just kind of hang out. And you know gradually introduce myself to people and then my goal would be to get -- and then gradually ease in to some discussion with them to find out where they were in terms how they felt about being involved in the movement. How they felt about coming to the meeting once a week and once they were at the meeting would they do other things related to what we were doing. Would they canvas, would they picket, what
INTERVIEWER: You also did some work in Mississippi?

DR. GLASCOE: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: The same kind of thing or--?

DR. GLASCOE: Exactly. Yeah, I worked at West Helena from—I worked in Arkansas from May of 1965 until—I don't remember exactly when in 1967. I had to come out because I was sick. And I was in Atlanta where I saw the doctor and then I knew John Buffington from seeing him at meetings and John asked me if I would come and work at his project in West Point, Mississippi and I agreed to do that in 1967.

INTERVIEWER: What was his project in West Point?

DR. GLASCOE: It was a regular project, you know the same kinds of things. You moved around and you got acquainted with people and you helped...
them—you know if there were challenges that they were facing,
problems they were having you'd help them to think through things that they could do or you helped them to do things to help solve those problems. And that was the tact we took in the meetings also. People would talk about things that they wanted to see differently in their communities and we would try to help people to think of what are some things that the community could do to make the changes, how should we proceed to make those changes. And you would help people to go forward with their ideas and try as much as possible to not put your stuff on them, you know let stuff come from them. And then support that. Like for example in Jones Ridge, Arkansas the Turner Elementary School, the families there were disturbed because every time it rained the toilets would back up and feces would float
down the hall in the elementary school. And so that had been going on for a long, long time. And they had been complaining and trying to get somebody in the county to come and see about it but no one ever came, and so when we started having the meeting in Jones Ridge that was one of the things that came up. And so I wasn’t working that part of the county it was my co-worker Howard Himmelbaum who was doing the work. And he said to people what do you want to do and so they said well we want to get this changed, so they thought about all the different things they could do and then they decided after they tried going back to the county and seeing about it again. Then they decided they should go to Little Rock and go to the Health Department in Little Rock, which is what they did. And then people came down and checked things out and they found that the pipes had
been laid uphill and so anytime it rained there was a problem. So once that was corrected then the people in that community said well we did that, that was great, now we can think of other things we can do to make the schools better for our kids. And so that was how we got started. And actually that energy took us to where people decided that they wanted to do a school boycott and to force desegregation. Because at that time they thought that the way that their kids could get the best education was if all the children were educated together. And so they decided to go for that. And we spent a good part of the summer of 1966 moving around to different places in the county and having meetings and talking and building people's confidence up so that when school started that fall we held 1500 of 1800 black kids out of the segregated school for six weeks. And then the school district did
capitulate and they desegregated the schools. But you know I think—I don’t think I said that in any of my little accounts. But midway that process I began to have different thoughts, I began to feel like we don't need to be doing this because the hostility was so tremendous and there was great anger that during the boycott, I wasn’t there yet, but anyway I began feeling like we should not be getting in these white schools, we should be trying to do our own school, make our own school what we needed it to be. And I attempted to broach that with Mrs. Jackson, the woman who was the matriarch of the family that was central in all of these activities. And she just couldn’t see it all. I mean she was just so caught—everybody was so caught up with we're going to finally get our children together and what she said to me was when our children get together they would be
fine. The children are not full of hate, the children will love each other. And so but what I was aware of was the fact that the anger and the hostility was so great that we just didn't need to be taking those chances, that was how I felt. But we went ahead, we desegregated. And I don’t think it was five years later when I went over to see Mrs. Jackson one time and she says Myrtle all of my kids hate white folks. And so I mean I knew that already. And so she says well why is that, I said well you know they are being treated a certain way in the school. And so you know once the kids got in the school, they had been in the band in our other school, they couldn't get in the band. There were so many things that they were not allowed to do and people were condescending to them. And Mrs. Jackson was so unhappy and the kids themselves were very unhappy.
INTERVIEWER: So that's how your thinking evolved, once you did come down South and see the realities of certain situations—

DR. GLASCOE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: --and so the hostility and hatred was pretty visceral—

DR. GLASCOE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: --and part of the struggle. You mentioned Mrs. Jackson, is this Gertrude Jackson?

DR. GLASCOE: Gertrude Jackson, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So this was in the community of Marvell with Earlis and Gertrude Jackson?

DR. GLASCOE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Can you talk a little bit more about your interactions with them? About that project and working with the both of them and voter registration and the schools and public safety.

DR. GLASCOE: Well the Jackson family was the—you know like you can say in most projects there's usually one
family that is kind of around which
the project revolves. And so the
Jackson family, Mrs. Jackson and her
husband Gertrude and Earlis, as well
as James Jackson, Mr. Jackson's
brother. As well as a Jackson who
was a cousin who owned the store.
All of those people were staunchly in
support of change for their
communities. And Earlis Jackson and
James Jackson farmed together, they
planted cotton and I think they
planted soy beans. And there was one
instance where they were getting
ready to harvest their cotton and
sugar was put in the gas tank of
their cotton picker. They went out
to crank it and they found that the
sugar was in there and of course the
engine was destroyed. And Mr.
Jackson, Mr. Earlis Jackson and Mr.
James Jackson didn't get upset, they
just stopped and took the thing
apart, cleaned it, put it back
together and went back to work. And
they just kept going like that. I mean they were an inspiration to all of us, they were so strong. And Mr. Earlis Jackson and Mrs. Gertrude Jackson had 11 children and they were just practically fearless. And Mrs. Jackson had this kind of soft spoken way and she was easy going and I mean as I've gotten to know her since then, in many ways that was just a façade because she is powerful. And so what would happen was that one of the things that I would do every week would be move around to different people in the community who were working with us and just go and visit and sit with them for a little bit to see what they were thinking about. And actually I used that as my preparation for the meeting that we would have later that week. And so I would go and I would sit with each—maybe four or five different people I would sit with and make sure I knew what was on their minds and say some
things to them that I thought they needed to hear. And so I would go to Mrs. Jackson and we would do that. And then what I began to realize after awhile, I didn't pick it up right away, was that when I would go to Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Jackson would always have great ideas about things to do. And so the way she would do it is she would tell me the idea and so I would be so excited about it I would just go to the meeting and when the meeting was going on I would present the idea. Then I finally—I backed up a little bit and I thought about it and I said to myself, Mrs. Jackson is planting stuff on me and she should be doing it herself. And so when I finally got clear about that the next time I went to see Mrs. Jackson and she started her little process of putting these ideas on me. I said Mrs. Jackson this is your idea, it's not my idea it's yours. And so this time when we go to the
INTERVIEWER: So is it fair to meeting you're going to present that idea, I'm not going to present it. And so she—you know she said no, I don't know how to present that idea, you are good at presenting the idea, you are the one that needs to do it. I said no Mrs. Jackson, you are the one who has the idea and your community needs to know that you are the one who has the ideas and you are the one who needs to stand on those ideas and help people to know how to do them. And so that first time I waited until she expressed her idea, it was kind of tense, but she did indeed say what she had on her mind. And then as time went on she would do that more and more. But in the long run it was Mrs. Jackson who pulled people together and got them organized and they actually set up a community center and it still is in existence. It's limping, but it's still there.
I'm trying to understand how this was all pulled together, that volunteers who came from the North, there was always a movement afoot in the communities in the South. So what did the volunteers bring? I mean it looks like you were looking for it to be a mutual process, that you spent time observing and watching and didn't want to insert yourself and come in there and say that you think you should do this and that and that. That you were very careful in working with the communities and letting the ideas come from them.

DR. GLASCOE: My goal being there was to create a process where they got in touch with the fact that they are capable and where they develop confidence to move and do on their own. And I saw that as the building blocks to them being in charge of their own communities and doing things for themselves. I have to say that where I was successful in that
regard with Mrs. Jackson, she was one of the few people who were willing to pick up and assert herself. There were people who wanted to be in charge and to do things but they didn't trust themselves. And Mrs. Jackson got to where she did trust herself and so she was able to step forward and do things. The experience I had—

INTERVIEWER: Some other community leaders it didn't work the same way.

DR. GLASCOE: Well I mean—for example, now Mr. Jackson when I came to things that were related to what he had to do, you know once—like for example some people who get sugar in the gas tank of their—in the tank of their cotton picker would just be devastated. But to Mr. Jackson and his brother it was sort of like this goes with the territory, now let's just fix it and keep moving. But he—when every time I came back to visit Mr. Jackson would tell me stuff, okay
it would be like—they didn't call me Ms. Myrtle but Myrtle we still having these problems and it was to sort of like telling me to help him to solve them. And I would always be saying well Mr. Jackson, did you do this, did you do that, things that I used to say back when. But you know where Mrs. Jackson—Mrs. Jackson figured out how to send all of her girls to college. I mean she connected with a woman in Connecticut who was willing to send her money so that those kids could go to college. I mean I didn’t know a thing about how she did it, I didn't know when she did it or anything, she just did that. You know, do you see a difference in the spirit. And her husband never—I mean there were things that he was strong on but not by comparison to Mrs. Jackson. She was creative, she is creative, you know she was always looking for ways to do stuff that other people didn't think about.
INTERVIEWER: During your time with SNCC the dynamics of group leadership and participation really changed in relationship to the white workers, what did you witness in the communities in which you worked?

DR. GLASCOE: Well my co-worker Howard Himmelbaum was a Jewish guy and we worked fine, I mean I thought we worked fine, we did work fine actually we didn't have any conflicts of any sort. But when we were planning for things to do the two of us always talked and we always worked out whatever differences of opinion we might have before we went to do things, like I think I mentioned in one of my write-ups that we had this workshop for people, it was like a legal support workshop, where people who were trying to get on welfare and couldn't came and a lawyer would talk to them. Anyway I was saying that I said that. But Howard attending the meeting in New Orleans where the
decision was made that the white workers should leave the black communities and go and work in white communities. And when he came back he just matter of fact said to me, Myrtle I'm going to leave in X number of days. What we decided at the meeting was this and so he told it to me and he did indeed leave. And I was worried, I was scared at first but once he was gone I found that there was stuff inside me I didn't even know I had. And so when it came time to make decisions I was perfectly capable of to make them on my own. I began coming up with ideas I didn't even know were there. In the beginning I was feeling very good and very confident and so that doesn't speak to the question of him being a white person at all, it speaks to me. My sense of what it was was that I was deferring to him, I was in that traditional man-woman role, you know where the woman gives
over to the man and I didn't realize I was doing that. And so I discovered some things about myself once he left.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have a sense what the larger discussion was? Because obviously it empowered you to feel that there was more that you could do and that you had the capability to be out there on your own but did you—it sounds like you were kind of working on your own where other people were spread out all over the place. Did you have a sense of what some of the larger questions that people were asking in regard to making that change about where white workers would work and where black workers would work? DR. GLASCOE: Well I understood entirely that it was difficult for black people to get to where they could feel comfortable doing things for themselves with a white person in a position of to their way of
thinking of authority. Even though I did my best to say to people and to behave to people, you are in charge of your community, I'm here to help you to think about what you want to do and to plan for things that you need to do and to do those things effectively. It was fine for me to say that but it was quite a different thing for people to fully buy it and not see me as an authority figure. Because I came from somewhere, I was a college graduate, I was actually a Master's degree person at that time and I had a level of expertise, I could talk well, I could write well. I knew I had a whole lot of knowledge that people didn't have so for them to rise up and also not think of me as someone in charge, that was a challenge. And so if I had been white that's even more of challenge. And I understood that, I saw that. I didn't see it as clearly before Howard left as I did after he was
gone, I saw it, you know, and I saw how people had backed off and how they weren't as comfortable to be themselves around him. And so of course—I mean my position was not to rub that in his face because he had done many things in that community that helped that community and I respected that and I respected him. And as a matter of fact I like him, I'm still in touch with him. In many ways, you know, we lived in the same house, he was like a brother to me and so it's complex.

INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm.

DR. GLASCOE: It's not anything, it's not open and shut. But the part that could be open and shut is for white people to get to where they become aware of who they are and how they impact other people, other black people. And for Howard, Howard was willing to pull himself back and do some reflecting to see how that was. I don't remember that we ever talked
But does that get closer to what you want me to talk about?  

INTERVIEWER: It does, it does.  

DR. GLASCOE: Okay.  

INTERVIEWER: So it was not only a change you noticed in yourself but you did notice a change with the community members you worked with.  

DR. GLASCOE: Oh yes, mm-hmm, yes, yes.  

INTERVIEWER: So how long did you spend in the South or when did you finish your work with SNCC?  

DR. GLASCOE: I left SNCC in the fall of 1967. And I worked as a fulltime worker until—from May of 1965 until the fall of 1967. By this time I'm in Mississippi and I'm flat out broke. And there was an opportunity for a job in the Head Start Program and so I took that job, yeah.  

INTERVIEWER: Following your formal work with the movement, you went on to write and teach about two of our
most renown African American leaders, W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. And between 1985 and 1993 you were the Founding Director of Charleston's Avery Research Center. How do you consider these activities to be part of your ongoing contribution to the Freedom Movement?

DR. GLASCOE: Well first of all I became an activist. When you become an activist you don't give up being an activist, it gets inside you. And so you know I approached things—I guess I was an activist when I was a kid because I went straight at stuff and I had to learn how to go at stuff and not go so dead straight. Because lots of times when you go straight at stuff you turn people off and they are people that you need to be connected to. What did I do first—after I left—after I worked—the first thing I did that was not—well, I taught at Tougaloo College right after I worked in the movement. And
in a sense that was an extension of—I worked in the Head Start Program and I don't know if anyone has said this to you or not, you know in an interview or not, but the Head Start Program in Mississippi which was started in 1965 was the first Head Start Program in the country. And the way it got started was that the volunteers, the white volunteers, who had worked in Mississippi came back home all caught up with their feelings about how people were so poor and people did not have decent schools and people did not have enough food to eat, they got involved in trying to set up some kind of program to meets those needs. And what they came up with was the Head Start Program. And so on the one hand in the sense that it—in one sense it was an excellent situation because for the first time people who had been working the cotton fields and making stuff like $10 and $12 a
day were making $65 a week, I shouldn’t say $10 or $12 a day, $5 a day. You know you pick a certain number of pounds you get $5 for that and you work 12 hours to do that. So those people had jobs where they were making $65 a week. And it was the first time black folk had jobs that were not connected to the white power structure in Mississippi. At the same time by placing the program on the wheels and the infrastructure of the movement, it gradually destructed that infrastructure. What I'm talking about is how people got together to create programs for their children before Head Start and to work out ways to feed their children before Head Start on their own, out of their own funds. When the money came then there got to be concerns about well who makes the decision about who gets the jobs and how do people get to have these jobs. And so what you had was people who had
worked together all through the movement being separated because so
and so was on the Board and he made sure all his family got the jobs.
And Ms. Johnson over here who had also worked closely with him in the
movement days was not on the Board and so she didn't get to have any say
about who got the jobs. And furthermore she might not have gotten one herself. And so that just dropped all kinds of poison down into
the infrastructure of the movement.
And so after awhile people who had been close, who had worked hard together, who had just struggled together weren't speaking to each other. It was very painful to watch, very painful. I worked for that program, I was the Director of the community program organizers. You probably don't know but Senator Stennis fought the Head Start Program. You know every time—like we would—we had the funding I think for—
whatever period we had the funding for and the program was going along and people who—everybody who worked in the program had formally been working in the movement. And so people continued to do the things they had done in the movement, to make sure folks got information, to make sure folks stayed abreast of certain issues, to make sure folks got out to vote and stuff like that. And so of course Stennis fought it, this is a federal program supposed to be for education and food and changing communities, it's not supposed to be the movement. So he would bring the program to a dead stop and so people would not have jobs for X amount of months. And then there'd be a big fight in Washington and then the program would come back. And then there'd have to be a decision about well who's going to get the jobs this time, who's going to be on the Board, because
there were all these rules and regulations that people had to go by in relationship to that and so anyway.

INTERVIEWER: It got very complicated and—

DR. GLASCOE: Very complicated.

INTERVIEWER: --and very political.

DR. GLASCOE: Very political and really nasty. It was deeply disturbing and I was right up in the center of it. You know folks like me always had the job. And so people who had worked in the movement with me were angry at me because I had the job. And of course it didn't have nothing to with—I mean I had the job because I had the job. But their jobs had been cut off because the program was stopped. So even during the time when the program had stopped there were certain people who kept on working, I'm one of those. I got to a place where I decided well this time when the program stops I'm
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01:58:15 | quitting. And so I just waited, I just stopped working until the program came back and then I went back to work. Because it was too painful, you know it was just too painful because folks were angry at the way the program was going anyway and then of course I was a butt of all that. It was just very, very hard, very hard.
01:58:36 | INTERVIEWER: So you did your work with Head Start and I—
01:58:36 | DR. GLASCOE: [interposing] Did my work with Head Start and then I went to Tougaloo College. And I taught at Tougaloo from 1969 to 1972 and I taught in the sociology department, I taught for Dr. Ernst Borinski. And because of who I was to a large extent, I just continued doing what I'd always been doing. Bringing information to people, helping the kids to understand certain kinds of things, you know. At the time I became a Muslim, I was in the Nation
and I was passing that information onto people, how to eat to live, and so the kids would be walking around campus saying did you hear what Glascoe said last week, she said you're supposed to eat this and you're not supposed to eat that. But I enjoyed that tremendously. And I also—I developed a course that was called The Small Group in Process where we focused on getting to know ourselves as individuals and also as people who are part of communities. And I've had young people to say to me that that course caused them to think about themselves in ways that they had never realized that they needed to and it helped to change their lives. And to some extent I still have versions of that course salted into everything I do, you know that is like in my teaching.

INTERVIEWER: Is it a course that kind of mimics your own evolution in your own life, kind of being a part
of community and getting involved?

Did your own experiences kind of feed into developing that course?

DR. GLASCOE: I'm sure. I'm sure of that but it's actually focused on—see the challenge for me has been getting to know myself, getting to know who I am, getting to know what my gifts are, what my liabilities could be, what areas of my personality need me to be aware of them and be on top of them all the time. And that was the gift that I attempted to give to my students through that course. That it's very important for you to know how you affect others. When you go into a situation what's your personality like? Are you open and outgoing, are you shy and retiring, do you just kind of take things as you go along and in any of those cases how would that affect other people who are just meeting you. So if you want to be—like most recently I've been teaching education and the
way I would approach that whole set of issues was well each one of you has a story and each one of you needs to tell your story to yourself first. And then you need to tell your story to the class so that each one of us can get to know each other. And in that process I actually set up a format for people to follow, to do that and so it was—what I would ask them is what are you bringing in your suitcase with you of your beliefs and your attitudes into classrooms where children are. Do you know what you have in your suitcase? If you look in your suitcase that you're bringing with you and you see some things that you'd rather not the children have, do you know how to take those things out of your suitcase, do you know how to adjust those things, so that you don't bring that in its form that it's in now to the classroom. Can you see how that would affect the young people in the classroom? Those
are the kinds of things, that's how I do it now.

INTERVIEWER: Well you made the comment earlier about—

--but I wasn’t there on my own, I was in support of work that was already going on. And I attending meetings and I participated in discussions with people. And John had started a restaurant in West Point and I did things to help out with the restaurant. And we got—by this time John had figured out how to get food stamps for us and I was in charge of the food stamps and I would buy all the food and people would get mad with me because I wouldn't buy stuff they wanted. I mean I really don’t remember more than attending meetings and being in support of the work that was already going on there when I came. I didn't do voter registration in West Point. I did
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<td>some voter registration in Arkansas.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: In Arkansas, okay.</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Right. But I didn't do voter registration in West Point at</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: I wanted to get back to a comment you had made, once an</td>
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<td>activist always an activist.</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Mm-hmm.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: And how that activist mentality or your work on the Freedom</td>
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<td>Movement how you moved that forward in some of your other work, for</td>
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<td>instance your writing on Du Bois and Booker T. Washington or your work at</td>
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<td>the Avery Center. And if you could talk a little bit about that, just to</td>
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<td>see how that mentality, what you were able to take which you worked on in</td>
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<td>the past and how to bring it into some of your—</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Well I mean it's not a—</td>
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<td>first of all I need to say it's not a conscious process. What I'm saying</td>
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and you plan it. But my way is to be up front and to be straight ahead. And I had to learn at the Avery Project that that wasn’t going to work. That to be upfront and straight ahead with people who were waiting for you to give over to them was not going to work. But at the same time they were kind of in a tight position.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us a little bit about the Avery Project, just for the record.

DR. GLASCOE: Okay. I was invited in 1985 to be the Founding Director of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. It was envisioned as in archives by a group of people who had attended the Avery School—like the Avery School was founded in 1865 and it was the first academic high school for black people in Charleston, South Carolina. And it remained open as an academic high school for black people until 1954.
And by that time, by 1954, the city of Charleston had a school that had combined academic and vocational pursuits. And right now the name of that school doesn't come to me. So the Avery School was closed in 1954 and the building that had been built for it—I need to go back and say this, during the years that the Avery School was open it was supported by the American Missionary Association and there's a connection between the American Missionary Association and the Amistad and I can't speak about it directly right now, but anyway, so there's a lot of history in there. And so anyway people who had—it was a school that had a reputation of being discriminatory inside the black community. There were comments made that black skinned people did not go to the Avery. If you got there and you were black skinned you were there but the Avery did not welcome black skinned people, they welcomed light
skinned black people to the Avery. And so that was one of the reputations of the Avery. But the story, the long and the short of it is, graduates of that school after the school was closed and it went through a number of different incarnations with different organizations living in that building, those graduates got together and they wanted to get the building back and put back into it an institution that would support the education of black people in Charleston. And so I was invited down to head that up. When I got there the organization it called itself the Avery Institute for African American History and Culture. I think they called themselves the Avery Institute of African American History and Culture. They had written a grant to the National Endowment for the Humanities and received a planning grant. And so
there was a plan in place and my job was to bring that plan into fruition.

And I went to work on that. When I came the building was not in any way usable, it was sitting there and it was deteriorating. And so boy oh boy, go back and try to recap all that.

INTERVIEWER: You don’t have to recap everything.

DR. GLASCOE: But what was clear to me when I first came was that because the building—because literally I was given an office that was about twice the size of this room and I was told to work in that office. And of course that first year I had enough money to get me through the budget year, I actually had some money left over at the end of the year. So the first thing I started thinking about was how was I going to spend that money, how was I going to make it worth the while of it being there.

And so I purchased collections from a
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<td>Guy and Candy Carawan of the music of John's Island. I purchased that collection and also the art, the photographs. I can't remember—you know all this.</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: Mm-hmm.</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: So that was my first purchase. And so I found out that was—actually Guy and Candy came by to say hello and we got into this conversation and they started telling me about how the people on John's Island really did want those materials to be available to them.</td>
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<td>And so he talked about it as if, if I could I would make this available.</td>
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<td>And so I said well Guy, I think I have enough money in my budget that I could possibly work on bring those materials here and so I did. And so I let him know shortly and then we got this process going where we purchased the collection, I don't remember what we paid for it, we purchased the collection. We</td>
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purchased the photographs, was the
guys name Yellin [phonetic], I don’t
remember what his name is. We
purchased the photographs from him
and we purchased the music, I don’t
know who owned the music, anyway we
got it. So I got that and I bought
some furniture for my office. That
was the way I used that budget money.
And I got busy thinking about what
kind of ways could we do other things
to let people know that we were there
and that we were alive. And so the
first thing I did was to plan a
conference on the work of black women
in South Carolina. I think prior to
that—no I think I did that right in
the beginning. So at the end of the
budget year I found out that the folk
in South Carolina who make decisions
about who's going to get money and
who's not going to get money had
made a decision, and since we didn't
have any operation there was no
reason for us to have any money. And
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| 1576  |            | so they said that to me and so I started telling them all the things that we had done and all the things I had intended to do so they gave me a budget for the next year. And it went like that for the next couple of years. And then with me planning—you know the program that Elaine talked about on the study of African American funerals and mourning customs we also did that project and Elaine worked with us in that project. And we did all kinds of stuff until we had a building where we could do stuff in. And then of course as I was going along we started working to do the building, we had to come up with a plan for how we were going to do it, where we were going to get the money from and there was black person in the legislature, a black Charlestonian who was in the legislature and he was instrumental in helping us to come up with a plan for how we could do that. And the
other thing that I didn't mention was prior to my coming the organization
of graduates had lobbied the state legislature and gotten a commitment
from them to support the development of the Avery Research Center. All of it is about how I was able to figure
out ways to keep it alive until we actually got into the building, got the building going and of course part of doing that was the building had to be fully renovated. And of course the college was doing that. What else do you want to know about that?
I could talk about that for the rest of the afternoon.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see that work, in working with the center for—let's see you were there—

DR. GLASCOE: [interposing] Do I see it as part of my activism?

INTERVIEWER: Yes. And in what way?

Or when looking back on it now.

DR. GLASCOE: I mean bottom line on that is that—I may be mistaken but
the average person who would come somewhere to work would expect people to tell her what to do and to say, well you can use these funds to do this, you can use these funds to do that. My position was the funds are there, I'm in charge of them, I'm going to figure out what to do with the money. I'm not going to ask nobody what I should do with this money, I'm going to figure out—then I began to realize that my boss who was the Director of Libraries at the college had said to me I don't want any surprises. So I took a position that anything I was getting ready to do I would tell him. And I literally would tell him, I would say David what I'm thinking about is this, and I would lay it out what I was thinking about, whatever it was, and instead of him saying I don't think you should do that he would say well I don't know if that's a good idea. If he did not tell me no, I was gone.
That's the activism. If he did not say no, I mean I just went ahead and did it. Which means that every budget I had I spent all of the money when I was supposed to spend it. I bought books, I bought tapes, I bought equipment, I have a copy of Du Bois' papers there, I did a whole bunch of stuff. And so you know it was about we're going to keep this thing going, we're going to make it work, we're going to bring it to life, it's going to have a life—I mean literally and of course that's where I ran into trouble with the school, it's going to have a life of its own. Because my position is when you put something into action it does create a life of its own and your job is to see what that is and then to implement it. But the college didn't want that, the college wanted to put the Avery together, they wanted it to sit over there so they could say, oh you see this lovely place that we
gave the black people, isn't it wonderful. It is wonderful but it has a life of its own, if you're not going to honor the fact that it has a life of its own, I had to leave. I literally had to leave because I got to a point where it was clear to me that the college wanted me to sit there and move papers. Mm-mm. Because I was interested in an oral history project, I was interested in having the freedom to see what needed to be done and getting out there and doing it. You know this is an institution that is here for black people and it goes out to find the black people and to do the work that the black people need to have done. You don't bring me in here and set me up in this place and then tell me I have to have this hat on my head that's going to keep me from seeing stuff. Nope you don't do that to me, not me. And then of course I went over to the college to teach in the
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<td>School of Education. And they gave</td>
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<td>me a syllabus to teach the</td>
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<td>introductory course in education to</td>
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<td>people who were going to be teachers.</td>
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<td>And the first thing I noticed was</td>
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<td>they had nothing in there about</td>
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<td>anything except white people. So by</td>
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<td>this time, you know in education</td>
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<td>multicultural, so the first thing I</td>
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<td>do in that course is to introduce</td>
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<td>native people, African people, Asian</td>
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<td>people, all of the different</td>
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<td>permutations of that. And I don't</td>
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<td>ask them can I do this in my course.</td>
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<td>In so many words when people would</td>
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<td>ask me I'd say I don't know how to</td>
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<td>teach the course unless I teach this,</td>
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<td>do you see who I am.</td>
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<td>1720</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: We didn't get to talk a</td>
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<td>little bit about your work with</td>
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<td>W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T.</td>
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<td>Washington in your research. And I</td>
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<td>was wondering if you brought any</td>
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involvement in the Freedom Movement when you started to work on these topics or teach and write about them. Were there any kind of new insights that you had bringing their words and writings of a previous era?

DR. GLASCOE: Well the bottom line on all of that is I've done one published article. Actually I've done about three published articles about my work on Du Bois. I did my work on Du Bois educational thought and how it evolved and how it changed over the years. And I'm getting ready now to go back and publish that material, I'm getting ready to get into that dissertation and pull it up and bring all of what I have now to it. And I mean it's interesting because I was invited to give a paper at Greeley, Colorado on Du Bois' role in founding the NAACP and in that context I wove the ideas on education onto all that. And so what I realized then was I'm much better
prepared now to approach that work
from the perspective of what I can
bring as a result of all my different
experiences. What I can bring to—
what insights I might be able to
bring to his thoughts. And I haven't
given as much time as maybe I will
give to Booker T. Washington. But
one of the things that I'm clear
about is that the whole two-ness
idea. Where I take it is that the
two-ness idea reflects on the
one hand—what I believe Du Bois was
saying was that on one hand we are
African and on the other had we are
American. And where I take that in
terms of education is that as
teachers we must be aware of the fact
that African American children must
have opportunities to reflect the
culture that they come out of and at
the same time they must prepare to
live in this society, even though
their lives in the society will
contradict many of the values that
they bring with them from their culture. And that for me is a level of the complexity and the intricacy of those ideas and that in terms of the two-ness. And so I'm trying to think if I can just bring anything else right off the top of my head in relationship to all of this. I don't know that I can. And I see myself connecting to Du Bois' ideas about what we'll call the Talented Tenth. You know that in the beginning he envisioned the Talented Tenth in terms of what they were bringing as well as who they were in terms of the class base for it. And you also know that later in the 1930's he got to the point where he began to say, well the way I approached it in the beginning doesn't work. And what I want are the most talented and the most gifted of our young people to come forward and be ready to serve. And the way to get them is not to go about it in the way that I was going
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<td>before. And what I see now is</td>
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<td>there's so many things that are going</td>
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<td>1803</td>
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<td>on that are about those of us who</td>
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<td>have must turn around and give.</td>
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<td>That's what I see. And I will have</td>
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<td>an opportunity to write about that</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER: In your perspective are</td>
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<td>there lessons to be learned or to be</td>
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<td>passed on based on your involvement</td>
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<td>in the Freedom Movement to young</td>
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<td>people to today? Are there some</td>
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<td>things that worked then that won't</td>
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<td>work now, are there some lessons to</td>
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<td>remember from then that we need to--</td>
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<td>people need to implement now? What</td>
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<td>would you say in that regard given</td>
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<td>the current climate of things?</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: What I would say is</td>
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<td>that our struggle is to fully prepare</td>
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<td>hand who they are as individuals and</td>
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<td>as members of a particular community</td>
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see clearly what the society is about. To see the contradictions between who they are as members of a particular community, the contradictions between that and what the society says it is and what the society purports to offer. And to prepare those young people to live and to survive in the context of the reality that we face. That's what I would say.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

DR. GLASCOE: Anyway, we're in such a dilemma in so many words, our children are lost, so so-called desegregated education is not serving us, it does not prepare our young people for the lives that they need to lead in this society. And furthermore there's no place, except that we do it ourselves, where our children can know and understand what's going on in this society. How the oppression is still here, it's alive and well and it surrounds us
and it eats on us. And my challenge
and the challenge I think that faces
all of our people is number one to
accept the fact that the racism and
the oppression is here, it's alive
and well, it's not going anywhere and
that our job is to do the same job
our ancestors had to do, is to face
it, accept it and work out ways that
we're going to have decent lives in
spite of it. And what that means is
on the one hand we're going to know
who we are, we're going to know what
we can do, we're going to have skills
to do it, at the same time we're
going to know about this thing that
calls itself a society. And what it
is and how it functions and how we
fit into or don't fit into it so that
we can manage our lives in it,
because we ain't got no place to go.
You know one of the most exciting
things I've heard lately is how the
Universal Negro Improvement
Association, Marcus Garvey's
organization is saying we need dual
citizenship. We need citizenship in
African country and we need
citizenship here. So that those
people who will be able to can pick
up and go someplace where they're not
going to be the enemy, where they're
not going to be treated like dogs.

INTERVIEWER 2: Myrtle.

DR. GLASCOE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER 2: You started talking
about the education system and how
you feel like it has failed provide
the kind of education that African
American children need, can you say
some more about it?

DR. GLASCOE: Well first of all the
teachers do not believe our children
are capable of learning. Not only is
that the case for European American
teachers, it is the case for black
American teachers who have been
educated in this system, who have
been taught how to teach by people
who accept the idea of the innate
inferiority of people of color. So when we have teachers who are with our children having those attitudes, there is no expectation that the children will learn, will have the capacity to learn. And so the experiences that the children need are not offered to them. And many times the teachers don't even know that they have these attitudes themselves which is the reason why when I'm working with people who are going to be teachers I ask them what are you bringing with you, what are your attitudes, what are your beliefs, what did you bring from your house, what did you bring from your upbringing. How do you know how you're going to approach these young people? And so many teachers tell me so many young people that are taught, and especially at Gettysburg College, believe that their job was to keep the children quiet while they gave lectures to the children. While they
1926 tell the children what they're
1927 supposed to know. They had no sense
1928 of the fact that the children are
1929 human beings and that they have inner
1930 selves that need to be awakened and
1931 part of education is about that.
1932 They didn't even know that about
1933 themselves. When I would ask them—
1934 you know when I would be teaching and
1935 I would say to you well you have this
1936 assignment and your assignment is to
1937 read X and X and X and come back
1938 prepared to discuss. So the students
1939 would come back, well what are you
1940 going to give on the test. I would
1941 say to them, I said well you read—I
1942 said now that is my question for the
1943 test, you have read such and such and
1944 such and such and such. And you have
1945 also learned that such and such and
1946 such and such is going on in schools.
1947 So how do you take those ideas that
1948 you learned when you read and apply
1949 them to what's going on in the
1950 schools. In what ways would you
change the kinds of things that are going on in the schools. Of course the students don't want to do that because it makes them think. They want to do that, they don't want to think. They want to have the answer— they want me to ask them questions that's going to give them an opportunity to give the answer that they read in the book. Mm-mm, that's not me. You have to think. In order for you to teach my child you have to be thinking because my child has to learn how to think, if you don't believe in yourself and you're not able to think, how you going to teach my child? You can't. And I'm not talking about just black children, I'm talking about all children, all of us, all of us. And in this society poor white children are in as much trouble as black children are and other children of color. Anyway, those are my thoughts. Did that answer your question?
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<td>1976</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER 2: Yes, thank you.</td>
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<td>1977</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Okay.</td>
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<td>1978</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER 3: Can I ask you one question?</td>
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<td>1979</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Yes.</td>
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<td>1980</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER 3: I was wondering when you were thinking about going down South—</td>
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<td>1981</td>
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<td>DR. GLASCOE: Yes.</td>
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<td>1982</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER 3: --that first time. Did people try to talk you out of it?</td>
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| 1983  |          | DR. GLASCOE: I didn't tell anybody, I just went ahead and did it. But of course my mother came down to visit. And when my mother got there she was—I mean I met a new mother. She behaved like she was an activist. And she was going around talking about what her group—and her group was doing things. She was a nurse and her group of nurses had decided that they were going to find clothes and package them and send them down to us, which was fine. And so she went around telling everybody and
everybody was talking about oh the daughter's just like the mother. And then when I got home my mother looked at me, I hadn't been in the house five minutes, she says you will never get a husband down there. And I didn't have enough sense to say to my mother, well mama I didn't go there to get a husband, I went there to do some other things. No one actively tried to deter me. As a matter of fact as I remember some people thought I was courageous. Are you going to do that, yes I am, and they thought that was courageous. But I wasn't at home, I was in California, my family was back in D.C. But my family wasn't happy with me being there. My Godmother was—she understood what I was about, she was good with it. But my mother was—as I know now, my mother was terrified. She was afraid for me and she was worried about me and she wanted me to be on the path that she thought I
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<td>having some kids. Does that answer</td>
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<td>your question?</td>
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<td>2030</td>
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<td>INTERVIEWER 3: Yeah, thank you.</td>
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