

Interview with Phyllis Sherrill for the YWCA of Asheville 100 Years Oral History Project by Sylvia Robbin on April 8, 1993

ROBBIN: Okay. This is Sylvia Robbin. I'm here to talk with Phyllis Sherrill. And it's April eighth 1993. And we're in the offices of the Buncombe Community Relations Council. And Phyllis, you listed on your card, it says Human Relations Specialist.

SHERRILL: Um-hmm.

SR: Can you tell me what that means?

PS: Jack of all trades and master of none in reference with dealing with the human race. I don't know. I think that's really a name that--. You know how they come up with names. But, we're primarily involved with the total community. And, I have been working as sort of a social worker, I guess, all my life. So that's one of the titles that I think since beginning working here with the Council that the Human Relations Department has come up with as my title. I was an employment coordinator at first. Then I was a community development coordinator. So these are just names and titles, you know, that people come up with and give you. I'm not one that's too particular about titles. You just do what you have to do, you know. I've been dealing with people and trying to help better people's lives in any way

that we can.

SR: And how long have you been with the Council?

PS: I have been involved with the Community Relations Council now twelve years.

SR: And what kinds of things do you handle (unclear)?

PS: We primarily deal with discrimination in housing. When an individual feels that they have been discriminated against because of their sex, race, age, national origin, handicap or familial status, which is family, the family status, or that you've been denied employment or housing for any of these reasons then you come into our office and we can investigate those allegations. In housing we have enforcement power, but in employment we do not. That means that we can, you know, take it into court if it need be, if we find cause in housing. But with employment we refer the individual to the EEOC, the Equal Employment Commission Office in Charlotte, North Carolina.

SR: So you work with other agencies in Asheville?

PS: That's one aspect of my job. The, the other part of my job is that I'm sort of a liaison person between the community and city and county commissioners or city officials in reference to living conditions or street or problems that individual may experience that they are not getting a reasonable response to by a supervisor or someone in a particular department of the city or the county and, for some reason.

And that things do get tied up because of paperwork or work load or this kind of thing. But--. And, to, to also assist with, you know, putting out fires. If someone calls in irate because a trash man did something to their trash can or they ran over a bicycle, or just something, you know, rather than--. If we can prevent an incident or if we can prevent any kind of (unclear) or anything like that we generally try to step in and see, you know, put a fire out is what we call it, putting fires out. And, generally, we're pretty successful when we see that that happens.

We also out there when there are racial disturbances we're called in for hate crimes. And if there's an uproar of any kind in a particular neighborhood in reference to fighting, young people or black/white issues or this kind of thing we usually, our office can usually go in and sort of settle everybody down and, and get some order and try to get people to hear each other and try to, you know, work the problems out before it gets, you know, out of hand, you know, if we can.

SR: Do things go to mediation then sometimes from your agency?

PS: Not, not, not normally, you know. I was instrumental in--. I was one of the founders of the Mediation Center and my boss is on that board of directors now. And I was on that board of directors and then we sort of switched around. So nothing comes from our office but if we feel a need, if we see that there is, that they can go to mediation then we would certainly refer them to mediation if, you know, we

think the case is warranted to do that. But, generally, if it's in reference to a racial incident or something like that we could take care of it here in the office. In fact, the Mediation Center oftentimes calls us, you know.

So, we, we have a very good working relationship with the majority of the agencies in the, in the, in the community. We're either sitting on a committee or we're on the board of directors. And we kind of keep our fingers on the pulse of the community and be involved and be out there and let people know that we are here and that we are concerned and, as I said, oftentimes can get things done when, you know, somebody else can't.

SR: So, coming in early then, as you said, things don't need to go to the Mediation Center.

PS: No. They get, the Mediation Center get most of their referrals from the courts and from, you know, they're generally from the courts, maybe from the school system. They have a very good program in the school system. But, most, I think the majority of their cases from the courts.

SR: I was just going to ask about the school system because I know there have been some times when you've been needed there.

PS: Yes. We've, we've gone in. My executive director mostly deals with the school problems. And now we've been there with them, you know, we've called. The principals in the system now is getting

more, very comfortable in calling us because they do--. And, in particular, when there's a racial incident they would call us and we would often help them mediate and solve the thing.

Sometimes parents, you know, get up in the air, you know, about their child, of course. You know, they feel they're mistreated. And we've been very instrumental in helping putting out fires in particular in the county, some of the county schools, you know. One we're having a real hard time with now, but--. You know, I say having a hard time, it's you know, it's still brewing.

SR: I happen to be volunteering at the Kandler Elementary School now. And I was surprised at the makeup on their school population.

PS: In the county? They're not that many minorities in the county system or, or that lives in the county, period, you know. So there are thirty-seven county schools, I think. And there's a (unclear) population among minorities first of all.

SR: It's mainly in the city.

PS: Um-hmm.

SR: If you've been here twelve years, how old is the agency?

PS: About twenty-five years.

SR: Twenty-five.

PS: Yeah, about twenty-five years.

SR: I, I ran across the name of Ruben Daly. Is that the person who—

PS: He was one of the founders. Yeah, he was one of the founders, he and Matt MaCoe. I'm not sure who the other (unclear) folks from the city. I know Kim Michael was with them at the time from the Chamber of Commerce, (unclear) George Green. And I think Miss Lucy Hearing. I can't remember, I mean as far as the agency is concerned.

And, the fact that there was a (unclear) for the Council is rather unique in that we're autonomous from everybody else, although, an agency. Although the city and county funds us, we have our own board of directors and we're not under the thumb of the city nor the county. And I think it was purposely set up so that we could investigate them. You know we could investigate the city or the county comfortably without having, you know--. Often they have called us several times especially when it comes to dealing with employment. We're often called to investigate situations.

SR: So you're funded by the city.

PS: City and the county.

SR: And, how many people are on the staff?

PS: There are five people on staff.

SR: Do you know what directly led up to the founding of the Council?

PS: I think the racial unrest that was going on at the integration of Asheville High School. You know, they, they were having, I think, and that, that some—. I'm not going to quote. I'm not sure exactly. But I do know it was during that year, during the integration when there was a lot of racial--

SR: When you said twenty-five years ago, I thought, well that's--. Those were the times.

PS: Yeah.

SR: I noticed that Asheville had been named an All-American city at one time.

PS: In the sixties.

SR: It really surprised me.

PS: I think Ruben Daly, at that time, was one of the persons. We have some information on that in our scrapbooks on this.

SR: Okay.

PS: I'll let you look at it.

SR: All right. And, before you came to this Council, were you at the Y then?

PS: Yes.

SR: The YWCA.

PS: Worked at the YWCA for about fifteen years and thoroughly enjoyed it. That was my, that was my growing up time. I started at the Y as assistant teen director and sort of worked my way up to the assistant to the executive director. I'm program director. And had some good years at the YWCA, some very, very, good years.

SR: Now that was after the integration of the Y.

PS: Yes. Yes. I was employed there after--. Yeah. They, they merged after that the black and white YWCAs merged.

SR: Nineteen seventy is what I—

PS: Yes, about 1970.

SR: So you were at the French Broad location?

PS: Um-hmm. Yes, I was, I was. That's where I was first hired at the Y. But, however, we were still, the two, the YW on—not downtown—the Employment Security Commission—

SR: On Grove?

PS: Grove Street, the YWCA there. And we had a swimming pool there and--. So we did not have a swimming pool at the Y on South French Broad. And then we built one. And then after it was built then they started shutting down the one at south, up at Grove Street under much protest from some of our white constituents, white, you know, staff. But they came over and stayed for a little while but eventually left, some of the staff. And some of our members who had been



members for years, life members, you know, no longer participated or was involved with the YWCA.

SR: What did they really object to?

PS: In my opinion, they just didn't want to mix with black folk. You know that's my opinion. And at that time the YW here had hired the first black executive director in this, I guess, in the western part of the United States, you know, which was Miss Caldwell.

SR: Miss Caldwell.

PS: Yes. She was our first executive director, black executive director. And you can imagine they could not deal with, with that, just the fact that we had a black executive director. That's just my opinion, you know, because I couldn't--. In being there and inquiring I could find no other reason. Nobody gave me a reason.

SR: Did you feel like that has healed over?

PS: In a way, yes, I think. I, I still--. I don't see those people that were originally involved at the YWCA. I don't see them there now, you know. They have--. They've changed executive directors I think three times and (unclear). They've had the fourth one since I left, the fourth executive director since I left. And all of them were white females. And they were, some of them were, you know.

And, I don't see the--. It is the minority participation there is almost, you know, is drastically dropped. I don't know what that was

about. The teen participation is not there, you know, where they were involving, because we at one time had a very strong youth program. And I, I think this Saturday, in fact, some of the--.

When I was there I had organized teen groups. And at that time we could go over to the school system. And we would set aside like thirty-five or forty minutes like 2:05 to 2:35, you know, we could have a youth group and I got them organized so that we could go into the school system. So I was master of teen groups. And on this Saturday they have scheduled a reunion.

You know, I think I had approximately, about five groups, you know, right out of there, when I was employed with the Y. And they all since have graduated. And we've got some, you know, through college and getting, you know, and through that whole thing. And so they're having a reunion and I'm just so excited about that to see some of the young ladies who did, who were, did work with me at the Y that I did have under my thumb and sort of help mold them into their careers and their, you know, adulthood. And I'm real, very, very proud of them, very proud of them. The majority of them have finished college, you know. They've gone to AB Tech or, you know, have had some technical skills and have been doing some, you know, have very good jobs. And I'm very proud of them.

SR: So that must have left quite a gap when those programs—

PS: I think so.

SR: --declined.

PS: We used to have teen dances for them. Oh gosh, there could be any given night I'd have four or five hundred kids at the YWCA with, you know, with teen dances and etcetera. We had chaperones and the whole nine yards.

And I'm not exactly sure--. Perhaps when--. I don't know if they—. To my knowledge, I'm not sure if their budget has ever been cut. But I'm not exactly sure what happened, you know. But I don't think people had the patience or the time.

I think I saw very--. Well, I'm not sure if there were any minorities on staff in, in management positions, you know. I think Mr. Wells, who's in maintenance, is still the only person that's still there. They have one other minority, a young lady who is sort of like a program director or something like that over there. And I did see a minority on the front desk the other night I was over there. But as far as, you know, being instructors or being on staff I don't--.

They have a very nice and very good daycare program or after school and, you know, nursery, you know, program. And I'm very impressed with that. And they have a very, they have a mixture of staff. But I think here again in that capacity the majority of them are minorities, you know, babysitting, that kind of situation. So I do know that there are some.

SR: And you haven't had any real connection with the Y?

PS: No. No. I, I still--. I still encourage people to go and, you know, I've always--. One of the things that was taught to us through the YWCA was that it's not the Y it's the people, you know. So don't say it's the YWCA. It's the people that run it. And if you're not satisfied with what's going on. But it's certainly not the Y and its philosophy and what it's about. It's how it's carried out, and by whom, by whom it's carried out. But we certainly encourage folk to go. And my daughters are members. And so we, we're still there. But it's just not like it used to be, you know. Things march on.

SR: I know you have--. You mentioned being on some boards. And I know you have done a lot of volunteer work in the city. I mean I know that from personal contact with you. Could you tell me something about that?

PS: Oh, the boards.

SR: Not necessarily the boards. But where have you put your volunteer time? Sometimes it is boards, sometimes it's other things.

PS: Yes. You know mostly I deal with human services kinds of things, you know. We're very interested in seeing that, as here again, that people who are at a disadvantage, you know, know where to go, know how to get things done. Finally we realized, you know, that life isn't as bad as it is simply because you don't know where to go, who to see and what to do. So I guess it's mostly human services kind of thing across the board with young people, with, you know, with young teenagers.

I lived in public housing for twenty years, Mountainside Apartment, raising my children. So I was looked at as sort of the social worker up there because--. And my house was always like--. My apartment was like the halfway house for the kids or the center, you know, because I had young people.

And so I had three kids, you know, two girls and a boy. And so they were always active and involved and doing things. And, fortunately, because I think my position with the Y was able to include them into a lot of programs and spend some good quality time with them through recreational kinds of programs at the Y doing fun things with them.

And I was quick to include other kids, you know, to take advantage of that because, you know, in housing developments, you know, we're there because we're on limited income, you know, and we're not able to, to be in a, you know, our own homes. So, you know, we, we try to make sure that they try to be as well rounded, you know, as possible and be happy even though, you know, you may be not in the best living condition but they're not the worst and be happy with what we have, you know. And so I was very quick to include the kids there.

I organized the teen groups there. I organized the parents and the mothers. We had fun things. We would have--. I would have a cookout. It was nothing. We'd just throw a grill out and just, you know, out on the street and just say bring some eggs and some hot

dogs and, you know, we'd just have a good time on Saturday morning. And people would just come, you know. So, I'd just do fun things.

And I see some of my young kids now who are excelling. One young boy in particular is excelling at the basketball team at Asheville High now, O'Neal Vernon. And I'm just very, very proud of him. And I saw him on the basketball court, you know, and saw him playing football. And got little cheerleaders together, you know, just doing stuff, you know, to be happy and having kids doing some productive kinds of things rather than getting out and carjacking themselves and other things that they're doing now, you know, and exposing them to, to the drug world, you know.

But that wasn't even--. Nothing like that was going on when we were outside at that time. And through the process of that and with my connection at the Y, you know, if someone couldn't get Christmas, their kids' Christmas out of layaway, it was nothing for me to get on the phone and call some folks down at the Salvation, Ed Schells. They'd call the folks at the Y, call the folk at, you know, Council on Aging. And, you know, just around because we knew folk there and knew they, you know I need five dollars and this kind of thing, you know. And we would help the individual to get the children's Christmas out of layaway.

We worked very closely with my church, Nazareth First Baptist. And so we were there when folk didn't have enough food and this kind of thing. We could get them food and, you know.

So your fingers, my fingers was kind of on the real pulse in everybody's pie up in the community so that if someone came to me with a problem we'd help them work it out, you know. Hey, it's not so bad. Let me see what I can do and we can work it out. You know, if you didn't have any clothes, okay. You know, sometimes you don't have to, you know, people don't have to come to you, you can see, you know, for yourself.

And I always had that keen eye looking in--. If I was ever in a position where I saw some mother, especially a single mother, wasn't able to provide, you know, very well for her children. I've often had the staff here just, you know, I know this family and I know the mother can't do this and let's do Christmas for them, you know. And the staff here would come up and buy Christmas for kids and we've come up with, you know, outfits and clothes and food, you know, just with the staff here. And I say--. I come in with tears in my eyes, you know, and they, they say we'd better start digging. And we, you know, we come up with something for them, you know, we would give them their Christmas, you know.

And, to see--. I remember one Christmas one of the staff members here and her husband said, well I'll get him a bicycle, Ana Gill and E. V. And she got him that bicycle and she said, and Gill said

I've got to go with him to see his face on that when he sees it, you know. And up the mountainside (unclear), you know. And when he saw that bicycle I don't know who cried the most he or Gale, you know. You know, just to see that, you know, that surprise on his face. He had no idea. His mother didn't know we were going to get it. But I knew him. He had been to the house and we'd sat and talk and he let me know what his wishes were, you know, just talking, you know. And right now I see him. He, he's a father now. God, seventeen and a daddy. But, you know, he is working. He's working with Domino's Pizza, delivering pizzas. And I'm so proud of him. And every time I see him he always reminds me of, you know, my bicycle, you know, and that kind of thing.

So when you--. Those are the kinds of rewards that I, you know, that I, you know. Just to see a kid come up and say, hey, Miss Phyllis, you know. So you know you've, you know, you've helped a kid. And, you know, he could be somewhere, you know. It could be worse but you let them know that hey, all you do is seek out somebody, you know, and let somebody--. I'm here or let them know that I was there to do stuff for them, you know.

SR: You've referred to yourself twice now as sort of a social worker.

PS: Yeah, well, yeah, I'm kind of sort of, whatever, whatever you call it.

SR: When you were in school what, did you have that sort of thing in mind?



PS: No. You know it's funny that you should mention that. We're in the process of getting ready to celebrate our second alumni reunion, Stevensly High School alumni reunion. It's no longer on the hill.

SR: I saw that in the paper.

PS: Yes. And so we're in the process of having a second celebration. It's really great, we think.

And so some of the things, some of the members of my class and some of the other class members are asking for their school record, you know. And, so it, since Stevensly closed I think the records have passed from one school to the next school to the next school, you know. So now they're housed at the Asheville Middle School on South French Broad. And so I asked for my, for my file. And so I read it off. And I got it in--. Oh, it's just amazing. And it's fun. The first grade through the twelfth, you know. So it's very interesting that you, funny that you should ask that. Apparently, from what some of the remarks that the teachers have made there I guess I was one of those people that was always there to help somebody, you know, always doing stuff for somebody else.

SR: And that showed up in your school records?

PS: Yeah. And one of the teachers said, you know, potential leadership or shows leadership or something like that. I don't know. I just sort of scanned over it. I haven't really had a chance to look at it. But, some of the people were looking at it over to the house the other

night and they were just laughing at some of the remarks. And so apparently, I guess that was one of the things I was destined to be, you know, to help people because if I can I will.

SR: Were, did you feel you were preparing for a certain kind of work when you were in high school?

PS: Well, I think along with that was where our teachers were helping. I, you know, when they ask if, you know, what you want to be I think when I graduated high school for some reason or other my mother's best friend and her daughter had gone to Cleveland, Ohio. And they went into the beauty cultural, you know, they were doing, went to beauty school. And I said, well, I want to be a beautician or a barber. Now, why I thought I want to do that is the only reason. I don't know, you know. I don't know. But I assume that's why I had that in my mind because in my yearbook it said I wanted to be a barber. So, and I did, I did go to Cleveland to, to pursue that.

But then all of our instructors at that time had asked, I mean at Stevensly High School, encouraged us--. I was an honor student and, you know, all that kind of stuff. But they made sure that we were prepared for college whether you wanted to go or not, you know. If you had that potential and you made good grades and stuff they saw to it that we took the college preparatory, you know, classes so that.

So I said, well, I didn't know if I wanted to go to college or not. So, I'm not sure if it was Mr. Reynolds or Miss Myrtle Lumley, one of the two of them encouraged me. Well, you know, you get prepared.

I think it was Mrs. Kennedy, Mrs. Geraldine Kennedy because she was our (unclear) and she told several of us, you know, who were potential good--. Well, we were good students, to take courses, you know, whether you want to go to college or not because you might change your mind.

And I'm glad they did because I was out of school about a year and I got a scholarship to Knoxville College. And even though--. I graduated in '57 and so I was feeling like, well, I'm just glad I'm out of school. I don't know whether I'm going--. If I had to get through I didn't know if I wanted to go to college or not. And so I went to Cleveland, stayed up there about three months with the, with the thought of perhaps going to barber school but that, you know--. I don't even think--. I think I just looked at it and that was about all, you know.

And then my mom called and said you got this scholarship. You're going to school, you know. And my father, I think, wanted me to go to A & T and he was encouraging me for that. But at the time, my husband, who was my boyfriend at that time was at A & T and I didn't think that was a good idea because I didn't go where he was. I came back home and with that help I packed up and got my school stuff together and went to Knoxville College.

SR: Had you applied for a scholarship?

PS: No. I hadn't applied nothing. I knew nothing about Knoxville College, nothing. I think from my coach. I played basketball and I

was a pretty good basketball player. And so I think through that--. And then apparently they had scouts, you know, to come up. And I did play a little intermural basketball.

At that time girls, you know, women they didn't have any--. Women's basketball was just a pastime. You know, it's like a floor show before the big game for the guys, you know. But, so we--. But I didn't think--. I didn't even pursue that. I majored in physical education and minored in biology. But, we came home and went to school. Went there, came home and off I went to college.

SR: And how was it?

PS: Knoxville College? It was an experience, you know. I was there for about two and a half years. I liked it. It was my first experience of having a white instructor, you know. Mostly it was a predominantly black school. And, you know, that was a little strange.

I had never had a white teacher, instructor before. And I don't ever recall having a bad experience with, you know, racial problems or anything. Even though we went to segregated schools and we had to pass by Randolph School because I lived in the area called--. It was on Morrow Street but we called it Stump Town.

SR: I remember that.

PS: Yeah. And so we had to pass by Randolph School to get to Hill Street School and so that was--. We never really gave that a thought, you know, about, you know, passing the school and everything, you

know, we just went to school, you know. I guess we accepted, you know, they had their schools and we had ours, you know. But I never, we never had--. I can't recall ever having an interracial bad experience.

Maybe, I--. One little something when I was on the bus. I caught the bus one day and so then at that time we were to go to the back of the bus. We sat at the back of the bus. And so there were no seats available so I sat, you know, in a seat, you know. And it just so happened that it was next to a young white girl that was a basketball player at Asheville High School, Lee Edwards, Lee Edwards. And I knew she played ball because, you know, we kind of kept up with each other and stuff. So we always wanted to play Lee Edwards or some of the whites because they were good company. And our girls' basketball team was very good at Allen High School and Warren Wilson. And we always wanted to because Warren Wilson had a good team and so did Allen. Now we played Allen High School but we never did get the opportunity to play Lee Edwards. And (unclear) I knew she played ball and I happen to sit down next to her. And I said, well, how's your basketball team going now, you know. And I said, you know, I saw y'all play last night. How many points did you get? Nothing, you know, she sat there like a stone like she was going to die. And so I ceased the conversation.

And I, I don't--. I can't--. I remember that but I don't remember having any feelings, you know. I just thought, well, she's

another one of those persons you got to, you know, you got to deal with. She's got a problem. And was okay with it, you know. But, but I remember, you know, being that way. Anyway, we did have to pass the school going to our school. And, you know, we just did it.

SR: Speaking of schools, I'm going to back up just a minute and ask you. I can't figure out where Stevensly was.

PS: You know where—

SR: Was it called Catholic Hill?

PS: You know where--. It's off of Valley Street. You know where Stevensly Center is?

SR: No.

PS: You know where Calvary Presbyterian Church on the top of the hill? You know where my church is, Nazareth First Baptist, up at the top of the hill there at the red light? (Unclear) You know where the new, where they're building the new garbage place down here on (unclear) Street?

SR: I was going to say is that your church—

PS: Right on top of the hill. But our school was, was where the parking lot is now as is the Stevensly Gym now, Stevensly Center. And it's a recreation center now. But where the parking lot is is where our school was.

SR: Because I saw a picture of it and I couldn't figure out where in the world it was.

PS: Yeah. We were up on the hill, up on the hill. That's still, that's still up there. The whole area has changed quite a bit but—

SR: Well, Hospitality House is in one of those churches up there on that hill. I had--

PS: Yes. It's across the street. Well, in fact--. Stevensly School, you can just look right out, right from the church you can look right into the school.

SR: Oh, okay. So, I, I do know where that is.

PS: Yeah. It's right in that area. Yeah. It's in that area.

SR: How many children were there in your family? You said you—

PS: There's just two. I have a brother older than myself, just, and me. And, he's, he's still around. He's, he's doing great. He's had some--. But, he's, he's, he was four years older than I was.

SR: And, were there--. Do you think you got your attitudes and your interest in helping people from your family?

PS: I think pretty much so. My mom was very much a, you know, person to get out there and do stuff. I think, from what I can understand from others and from what I can remember, my family was always, was sort of the pillar of the community kind of thing, you know.

My father was a high school graduate and he worked for Southern Railway. And so at that time, you know, that was middle class kind of folk. And he got a car every year, you know, that kind of--. And, here again, our house was the, was the center. You know we didn't have a center, you know. And as we grew older we did carve out a place that we called the Hollow. It's where--. You know where Martha's Center is?

SR: Um-hmm.

PS: And, you know where the ballpark is?

SR: Um-hmm.

PS: We used to call that the hollow. We would go down there and it was surrounded by houses and, you know, hills and everything. And we would have to beat our path. This time of year we'd all, all of us would get on our blue jeans and--. And the girls were just sitting up there keeping the boys company. You know, and the guys, were just, you know, cutting a path down to, down in the hollow. They'd cut the grass around and my daddy would help. You know he got us a basketball equipment and showed us how to, you know, put it up. He put it up and all that kind of stuff. He was a good guy. And, so that's where we, we--. That was our entertainment place.

But my house was like right there in the center of what we called the flat. And my dad and I played horseshoes and we had, you



know, all that kind--. He would get all that kind of junk for us and stuff, so--.

And my mom was the kind of person that, you know, she was straight from the shoulder with the guys. You know she would tell them how to protect themselves, you know. You know, my brothers she'd get them all in there. They call her Miss Adeline.

SR: Miss Adeline.

PS: Miss Adeline. And Davy Jones, who was the director of the housing authority, he has vivid memories of my mom because he used to come and talk to her all the time. Yeah. And we all grew up together, Officer Watts and his wife and Carolyn and Barbara, Preston Dorce, who's now a policeman down in Atlanta, Georgia. There were a bunch of us down in there and (unclear). And, so we all grew up together. And Officer Watts just recently retired.

SR: I saw that in the paper.

PS: Did you see that in the paper? Yeah. He, he's a great, great person. But all those guys used to come. And we had steps and they would sit down on the steps. And one of them would be at the top and she would just talk. And then she'd have time for the girls, you know.

And so, you know, and then she, I remember we said we wanted to have us a little social club. And so she said fine. Y'all can meet up here. And then we got one of the other girl's parents to sort of be our advisor. You know, so anyway, we'd meet at my house.

So anyway, we had a big wide basement downstairs, you know. And then my dad used to--. He was a fisherman. He loved to fish. And at time he would—it's funny--. He made frankels. The things that, you know, you put in the water. He had all the equipment. He melted and all this. He had all that equipment in the basement. And all of the fellows the men around used to like to fish they would come up there. They'd set a time when he was off on Saturday because he would work four days and be home two days or this kind of thing. He would go out, you know. But when he was home they would have a time down there. You know, probably had them a little moonshine or something, you know. But he, he's, he was a--. They made those things down there so--. It was sort of a hubbub. There was always something going on in my house.

And then as we grew older, rather than have us going out Halloween night--. My birthday was in October, so she would always have my birthday on Halloween, you know. And all the kids would be there and it kept us out of trouble, you know. We'd pull down the beds because we had a little, I think, a little four-room house, you know. And we'd pull the bed down out of the bedroom and put it out on the porch or somewhere and throw all the furniture back and she'd have hot dogs and hot chocolate and stuff and we would have a ball. That's where we'd have our—

SR: (Unclear)

PS: Yeah.

