

Gail Gomez

Side 1:

[intro] Chapin

House of George Cornell, 90 Carmel Rd. Dairy Farms. Constant remodeling from downstairs stable, upstairs apartment. Family began attending Unitarian Fellowship held in basement of Congregational Church on Merrimon.

[017] Fellowship met at homes, Guthrie's, our house. Adults met in back yard, children met in basement where we painted on plastered, unpainted walls. Mother started the Sunday School. She could do anything with children. She opened a boarding school for wealthy children in Boston, as did my father. She had 2 small children to feed after her first husband shot himself. My father ran a similar school in Boston for wealthy boys in the 1920's. He broke his back as Seabee in the Navy then moved to Asheville. He had reenlisted in 1943, about when Gail was born. A bridge fell on him. The Navy sent him for surgery which took 12 hours. I learned to walk with my daddy, as he was walking with braces and canes. Asheville was a military and prisoner-of-war town. [George C. Cornell, Muriel E. Cornell]

[073] He was told he would not tolerate cold climates. He oversaw the building of roads on the Cherokee reservation.

[095] Older sister, Elizabeth, moved here. My brother also moved down here after RCAF, with a British war bride. He worked in Rocky Mount, NC. [Elizabeth "Betty" Kdan]

[105] Walter Adams was editor, he hired my dad to drive a paper route. Close association of a Cherokee family with her brother. Adams' wife and Lisa Andrews created church school. We knew her children. The house burned down when Gail was 12. We started over again. Mother was teaching kindergarten for St. Joan of Arc school. She had a doctorate in Physical Education, making it up herself. Very rare. [Walter Adams, Lisa Andrews, Muriel E. (Mrs. George C.) Cornell]

[158] "She was a very special lady." She and Lisa were very close. [Muriel E. Cornell, Lisa Andrews]

[168] The priest at St. Joan of Arc school was a close friend of my father. The religious education nuns were sent away from the school. The others had a battle with the bishop about giving up the habit. This was mid-1960's.

[200] We lost a valuable educational facility. St. Genevieve was located where A-B Tech is now. My Father, Father Kuder [pastor of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church], and Rabbi Unger [rabbi of Beth Ha Tephila Temple] were leaders of the civil rights movement in the city. [George Cornell, Rev. William J. Kuder, Rev. Sidney E. Rabbi Unger]

[221] Describes rules for racial desegregation of public library, using St. Lawrence Church and a duplicate card catalog. The library was the first organization to desegregate.

[255] Jesse Ray's son could tell you. The desegregation in Asheville started in the UU Church.

[278] There was broad support from other churches.

[307] Desegregation came peacefully here.

[331] Gail graduated from high school in 1960. Attended nursing school in Durham. She met a doctor at Duke, a man from Spain. She and Albino Gomez were married in the UU Church on Vermont St. by a Charlotte UU minister. [Albino Gomez]

[340] Her mother, Murial, died in 1967. She had a dim view of Rev. Gross. George Cornell worked very hard at religious education, both child and adult, and led a men's group. [Murial Cornell, George Cornell]

[365] Gail was working in LRY. I was always in class with my father thru discussions at home. He was well read in religious subjects and shared it with us.

[378] He stopped construction work when she was 10, then delivered papers over northern Buncombe. He worked for Boy Scouts, when the house burned.

[401] He stopped delivering papers in 1959, when sister married.

[421] His back problems recurred. He had hiked until his lung capacity started to fail. He became wheelchair bound.

[436] He helped remodel the Vermont St. church.

[449] She taught Takaro's children in Sunday School. "I think LRY had a lot to do with the growth of Unitarianism in the South." This was 1955-60. [Timothy Takaro]

[460] She knew Helen Reed, but Claudette was younger and attended LRY with me. [Helen Reed, Claudette ?]

[488] We went to Birmingham with black and white girls and boys, in civil rights movement.

[505] Arthur was in LRY with me. His dad got drummed out of the Baptist church for his religious teaching. [Arthur Poultney, Norman E. Poultney]

[512] My mother was raised a Baptist (Northern). Story of his teaching in her church.

[529] They were reading about Noah, and he had them build an arc. They found out he was a Unitarian. He made you own your moral standards. [George Cornell]

[546] She is engaged in political activity, due to Vietnam war.

Side 2:

[2/intro] During nursing school at Durham, she married a doctor who was Spanish. He came to Asheville as an intern at Mission, returning in 1975 as a doctor at the VA Hospital. He had a practice in Black Mountain when they married. He was drafted, though a resident alien. He was sent to Vietnam. [Albino Gomez]

[2/037] My prior political activity had been with the Republican Party in Asheville. Democratic voter registration records were kept in the homes of people. LWV encouraged students to go to the homes and read the rolls. Afterward we made copies and checked the names, then they forbade writing copies, so we memorized a page and wrote it down. Many of the names were dead! There was no two party system here.

[2/047] My husband was sent to Vietnam in 1967 and I took care of my father who was ailing. My mother died in 1967. My father died in the spring of 1969. He was lonely, my sister was in Charlotte raising her second child. He was still involved in the church, going to the meetings when they decided to get the land. He died during abdominal surgery and the funeral was in Groces'. [Albino Gomez, Murial Cornell, George Cornell, Elizabeth Kdan]

[2/096] My generation was alienated by Vietnam and civil rights demonstrations. It was discouraging to see the government back away from its civil rights stand.

[2/125] Martin Luther King's death was devastating to young people. My husband and I went to California where he got his citizenship. He came back pretty bitter. It was very hard on medical personnel. We had a wonderful year in the west. He went back to Boston to the Leahy Clinic and I worked for the Harvard System in intensive care and research, at Beth Israel.

[2/153] We came back to Asheville in 1975 and I found intensive care at Mission primitive. Going back 10 years in medicine, I wanted to resign after a month. My eleven-page documentation of my reasons made my superior ask me to stay and fix it. So worked until my son was born, 1975. We had waited as long as we could. His name was Miguel. [Miguel Gomez]

[2/201] What brought you back to Asheville? Probably my roots here. I did not like cities. My husband went to work in the VA, in which he had had his last training.

[2/220] Our daughter was born, her name is Gail, in 1981. Albino still works for the VA and is helping to send Miguel to college this fall. [Gail Gomez, Albino Gomez, Miguel Gomez]

[2/233] After our divorce, I quit working to spend more time with the children.

[2/247] I was a member of High Country Crafters, and my sister, who is 22 years older, hired me to work for them. Kituwah is our latest project. These artistic things come from my family and my community background. The mountain artists have been very isolated here. [Elizabeth Kdan]

[2/272] When I began Kituwah, I realized how the artists have been isolated and exploited. It is both a social and artistic problem. The isolation has had a large impact on their art. It had very little influence from other parts of the country. We have started to build it.

[2/294] My father hated exploitation and my mother loved art. I didn't discuss religion with my Baptist friends because I could discuss it better. I did a prayer in high school one morning. Kids called me "Preacher" from then until the day I graduated.

[2/308] I went to public high school so I wouldn't hear how smart my sister was. When I went to college, I had to sweat to get back to study habits.

[2/317] Gail had not been active in the UU church since she began working nights. When she returned to nursing, she worked nights and weekends.

[2/376] My former husband and his new wife have began to go to UU church. Has your religious philosophy changed much? No, its how you live while you're here that's important. I'm not sure I'm an agnostic. There is a higher source.

[2/390] Are you hurt by the divorce? It's hard for a woman to raise children alone. My brother is not close to the family. He's becoming a millionaire.

[2/454] I am close to my sister Elizabeth. She has a many-sided life. I have enjoyed working with her. [Kdan, Elizabeth]

[2/500] End.