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**Cheryl Rodriguez:** This is July 28, 1994, interview with Grace Casamayor by Cheryl Rodriguez and Susan Greenbaum.

I was looking back over the interview that we did many years ago, and there were a few things that were on there that I could sort of pull together for this. And you said that after you got out of high school you went to work for St. Peter Claver [Church] as a church secretary for a while?

**Grace Casamayor:** Well, I went to work for the pastor, Father (inaudible). That's right after I graduated. He wanted me to type all the sermons so when he left he wouldn't have to be bothered. And—

**Susan Greenbaum:** (inaudible) two dollars a week (inaudible).

GC: (laughs)

CR: But you went to—you also worked for the welfare—you were a secretary at welfare?

GC: Yes. And while I was working for Father Connell, he was (inaudible) and from the conversation—he says, “Seems like they’re talking about me,” and the name of the—during that time they had visitors and it was Maceo Griffin. And at that time they were called the (inaudible). We used to call them “visitors.” And it was during the segregation—was very strong. And they had three colored visitors. There was Emma Mance and Herbert Green and Maceo Griffin. And they needed a stenographer to work for the three colored. So he went to Middleton [High School] to check the records of the people who had finished business course, and he started checking.

So he called Father Connell. And in the conversation, and to make a long story short, well, they called me to go. They told me they needed—they needed a (inaudible). And I

went and I was approved and I started working for the colored. District 7—during that time it was District 7 (inaudible). And then the visitors, they were under two supervisors. Mr. Green and Miss Mance were under one and they (inaudible) with us under another. And they had the district director then.

And they had to do with old age assistance, people who were Catholic, old age assistance, and the blind.

CR: Did they have a different rate that they gave? Was there a segregated benefit?

GC: Well, I cannot answer that. But I do know that, at that time—I don't know if in this particular there was, but during that time—I'm getting off. But to get back to the point, the teachers were getting a different rate.

CR: Right. Right.

GC: Because I was making more—I started there making seventy dollars a month, and at that time the teachers were getting paid around forty-something a month.

CR: Wow.

GC: And I started there on October 20, 1938. And in April, that they did—it was during Governor [Fred P.] Cone's administration, when someone said that was too much money to be paying a Negro—whatever word they were using then. (All laugh) It was too much money. So what they did, they let all the coloreds go, the three visitors and myself, and they let some of the white go. But Miss Mance told me that some friend of hers, who was a supervisor, one of the supervisors there, told her that after they let all of us go, and the whites, they rehired the whites. (murmuring from CR and SG). Isn't that terrible? Yes.

CR: That is terrible.

SG: But then what happened to the people who needed those (inaudible)—?

GC: Oh, they would use the white visitors. I'm assuming they use the white visitors—you mean to get their assistance? They will use that. They understand it, and they say it was too much money they're paying. I'm telling you what the teachers were getting. Because—are you going to get a chance to meet Mr. Davis? Edward Lee Davis?

CR: Yeah, I wanted to ask you about him.

GC: Yes. Now he was the president of Central Life [Insurance Company]; he was one of the presidents. In fact, I started working (inaudible) secretary, and after that they made me administrative assistant. And then he—

SG: What year was that when you started at Central Life? Do you remember?

GC: Yes. October 20, 1938.

CR: So it was the same year you started at the welfare board? You didn't work for the welfare board?

GC: Wait. Wait now. The welfare board was October twentieth.

CR: Okay.

GC: Nineteen—I went in 1939.

SG: Okay.

CR: Plus, you worked for the Urban League for a little while, didn't you?

GC: Hm? Oh, and the Urban League—I was working for the home demonstration agent. Let me recheck those dates, because my mind is not what it used to be. But I had October 20, 1938—let's see. I graduated in 1937. So I—evidently I started there—make yourself comfortable.

CR: Just rearranging. (All laugh)

GC: (inaudible). Yeah. Let me check that. Because I have—

CR: Don't worry about it, I mean it's approximately—

GC: Yeah.

SG: Approximate a time.

GC: Well, anyway, after they let me go from the welfare board, then I started working for the home demonstration agent, whose office was in the Urban League. So Estelle Jenkins, who worked at the Urban League, she told me, she said, "Honey, as fast as you type, you gonna stay here?"

I said, "Well, I don't know what else to do."

She said, "Have you made an application at downstairs?"

I said, "No, ma'am. I thought it was just for domestic work." (Inaudible) domestic work and I told her, "Well, with my (inaudible) salary downstairs."

And Miss Green, her husband worked for the head of the Urban League at the time; he died, and she was working until they found someone to fill his place. So she said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'll start calling the insurance office." That's how I got to Central Life.

CR: So, it was actually—the Urban League was kind of an employment referral.

GC: Yeah, this lady, Miss Griffin, who was the one, and she told me to go downstairs and see Miss Green. So Miss Green called.

CR: Was that Ellen Green?

GC: No. Ellen Green—that's my ex-coworker. Yeah. Ellen Green. No, this was Estelle, Estelle Jenkins, and Miss Green was the widow of the—Cyrus T. Green. Cyrus T. Green. I think they have something they must—

CR: They have the pool—the, um—

GC: Yeah, well, his wife.

CR: —the pool over there.

GC: His wife. She came and stayed there until they found someone to fill his place. And then she started calling and she called me and told me they wanted—she was going to call me, they called me, and said something like to come over, they wanted me to take a test because the secretary (inaudible)—

CR: I can, uh—

SG: Can turn it off.

***pause in recording***

GC: But, I don't know what happened.

CR: Well, what's—why is he interesting? Boston? Central Life? If he's— Later, when—

GC: He was secretary when I started working at Central Life. He was secretary-treasurer. And his secretary was out ill and they needed someone, so then, I went to work in her place. So when the secretary returned, in—before that, Atlanta Life had called. And Mr. (inaudible) was the (inaudible), Nicholas (inaudible) he was a general manager, and, so, he said that these people had called, would I be interested in continuing to work for them? I said yes. I didn't mind. And after (inaudible) and the secretary came, they kept me. So they sent me in the other part where I was a (inaudible). So I started as a substitute secretary, then I started as a clerk-typist, and I retired as secretary-treasurer. (sound of vehicles passing) Forty-five years.

CR: Wow. So you saw a lot of changes in Central Life.

GC: Yeah.

CR: When it first got started, and that was long before you actually got involved—

GC: Oh, yes.

CR: —with it, but it was down on Central Avenue. I mean, that was where their first building was, there in the Kid Mason Center—

GC: There's—I mean, it's not right on Central [Avenue], it's right off, but—

SG: —but in that same area.

GC: —Yes. Yes.

CR: How much associated—was it named after Central Avenue? Was that—I mean, I think it was, actually. But did people associate it with Central Avenue?

GC: I really don't know. Because they used to have, I think, on Central—I think there was Central Life Investors. I can't remember exactly.

SG: It could have been a coincidence.

CR: I think I read someplace that that was why they named it Central, but I didn't know how—

GC: That what was named Central?

CR: —that they named Central Life after Central Avenue.

GC: After—oh, okay. That I don't—I don't know.

CR: But, uh, one of the things that, when I was reading over your (inaudible) most of what we had talked about before was really about [Sociedad la Union] Martí-Maceo and growing up in the Cuban community, but you grew up at a time when relations with Americans were much more, uh, frequent, and the Depression took a lot of Cubans out of here, so the community was sort of in a different stage.

GC: Yes. During the Depression, that's when, I guess, jobs were (inaudible). They left here going to New York. Some went to Philadelphia and some went to New York. And they would travel—most of this travel was through the county (inaudible).

CR: So, that left the Martí-Maceo people, and especially second generation people, more likely to get to know Americans than they had—

GC: That's right.

CR: —and more involved in things, particularly things that were of importance to black Americans, like the equalization and Urban League and the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and things like that. Could you talk a little bit about that and about Central Avenue, and what possible part that played in the two groups of—getting together and getting to know each other?

GC: Well—

CR: I mean, you were telling me before that you weren't really allowed to go very many places on Central Avenue.

GC: Well, no, no, we didn't go—the parts that I know about of Central I know from my first marriage. But, no, they didn't let us go into the theater, either. In fact, we (inaudible) theater, that was in Ybor City, and we would go to the theater and when we got out someone was right there on the corner waiting for us.

CR: Was that more 'cause you were a girl, you think? Were the—

GC: I think it was because we were girls—but what's so—I don't know what to say. It was not even two blocks from our house.

CR: I know. It was close.

GC: Yes, which—it didn't make sense. Sometimes—

CR: But there were Cubans down there who were starting businesses and things like that (inaudible). I guess that was later.

GC: Most of the ones, I mean, you mean (inaudible)?

CR: Right, the—

GC: (inaudible) 'Cause they used to have Wimpey's place. We couldn't go there.

CR: Which place is this?

GC: Wimpey's [Wimpey's Bar-B-Q].

CR: Wimpey's. (Laughs) Was that the name of a bar, or—?

GC: (inaudible) I think it was right there on Maryland and Seventh Avenue.

SG: Oh, that was in Ybor City.

GC: Yeah, in Ybor City. Who you talking about (inaudible)?

SG: (inaudible)

GC: Oh. Oh, no, no. We weren't allowed at the door. And, in fact, when we went to the theater like that, we would go with someone. We weren't allowed to—

SG: You weren't allowed to go on Central?

GC: Oh, no.

SG: What were you told, the reason that you couldn't go on Central?

GC: I don't know, but (inaudible) (sound of large vehicle passing). The only place we went on Central was the Palace Theater—the Palace (inaudible) (sound of bumping microphone)

SG: The Palace (inaudible) was the only place you could go?

GC: Yeah.

SG: Because they were (inaudible)—

GC: And, then, when I went there because of a friend—my friend's mother took us, 'cause we were friends since we were four or five years old, and on her birthday she would take us to the Palace to a—for the—whatchya call it? (inaudible) or whatever the—

SG: Matinee?

GC: Yeah.

CR: There was also, like, the Rogers Dining Room—

GC: Yeah, and, uh—well, I was—I was wrong, then, and I used to go and have breakfast at Rogers Dining Room. Well, the first time I was living on Lamont [Place].

CR: This is when you were married for the first time?

GC: Yes. Mm-hm.

CR: And—your husband was American at that time?

GC: Yes.

CR: So did you go to Central Avenue with him, or—?

GC: Oh. Yes. In fact, during that time, we were working at Central Life here and we would walk and we would go through Central because it was shorter (inaudible), and we would go through Central. (laughs)

SG: Mm-hm. So you were grown and married then and you could do this?

GC: That was bef—we were—I was an adult. We were grown, but I wasn't married then. But I was working at Central Life. Estelle Esthers, I think you heard of Matthew Esthers? And he was the principal of the school up at FAMU. [Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University]. The high school? FAMU High School?

CR: Uh-huh. Yeah.

GC: Yes. Well, this is his sister.

CR: Oh. You were friends with his sister.

GC: Oh, yeah. That's the one—the mother—that's the one that took us to the Palace, the—yes.

SG: Did, um—so, you say that you didn't go there, but did other Cubans go there?

GC: Where?

SG: To Central, that you knew of?

GC: Not during our generation, when we were coming up, not then.

SG: Why was that?

GC: I don't know. I don't know because the Americans and Cubans—it was still—and this was the dividing line. You see, in the other case, we lived at the beginning of Ybor City and we lived on Seventh Avenue and all the neighbors on the back of us, they were Americans, colored Americans, every color (laughs). And, then, on the front, across the street, we had the Italians, the Spanish, we had them; then on further down we had the Jews. That other side of the street, it was a conglomeration of nationalities. They had Italians, they had (inaudible), which was a Jew. Then on the corner there were Italians and then it was the Spanish, then another one, and then on the other side, they were colored American, and it was all the kosher markets were over there during that time. There was kosher markets. And then, I think—I forgot what other nationality the other men were, but it was a combination that—

CR: So it was all mixed up, anyways.

GC: Yes.

CR: Yeah. But now—

GC: —and if you went further into Ybor City, you would find a conglomeration of Cubans, Italians, and during that time—it was just like brothers and sisters, at that time. “So-and-so, do you have some sugar? Will you give me some sugar?” Things like that. Later on it wasn’t the same. When I was—

CR: So, it changed later on?

GC: Yeah. When I was coming up, you still had several friends—but as far as us going on (inaudible), and we went to the movies because someone took us, ride the bus, but just to go on our own—

CR: You didn’t go to the movies on Central?

GC: No.

CR: No, the—

GC: When we were coming up?

CR: (inaudible) Mm-hm.

GC: No.

CR: No?

GC: But then they were gonna go put the Plaza Theater.

CR: In Ybor City.

GC: Yes.

CR: Okay.

GC: And they let us go in there (inaudible), but I tell you (inaudible). (All laugh)

CR: You were talking about Ed Davis, and I’d like to know more about him and—

GC: Oh, Edward Lee Davis. He was a savior for the teachers. He lost his job, but he was trying to get equalization of pay and he told me he had another friend that they left here, named (inaudible) Griffin—I forget the other. They left, but he stayed. So, what they did with him—at that time he was president of Lomax Elementary School which was, I understand, the biggest school for colored.

So, when he started this fight about it, like I was telling you, that the colored would get so much and the white would get more, and that's when I found out that, when I was getting the (inaudible) dollars, teachers were making forty (sound of something hitting microphone) something. So, of course, that didn't last long, because I started in October and in April they let us go. I still want—I'm going to hunt for that stuff, and I'm going to make copies and give you that copy of that (inaudible). I have all that stuff.

SG: You saved it?

GC: Oh, yeah. I saved all of that.

CR: So, did they explain why it was they were letting you go?

GC: No. (laughs). They didn't have to. (all laugh) I may look for it tonight.

CR: So, he didn't work for—he had been a teacher before he—

GC: Oh, yes (inaudible). They—I told you, they let him go, so the—this isn't—this—

CR: (inaudible)

GC: —this is the way they did. They transferred him from Lomax to a small school in Sulphur Springs. See, they couldn't fire him because he had tenure. So he took it, but then he left here and he moved to Ocala, and in Ocala he started the same thing. That's when these other fellas joined him. And what they did, I don't know if they fired them or what, but it was there in Ocala that he left the teaching profession and he started his business with real estate and, um, (inaudible). And I think that's how he made his dough.

CR: But then, how did he get into Central Life, and he was president of Central Life?

GC: All right. So, then, he was a stockholder way back there (inaudible), started as a stockholder of (inaudible). So, he was a stockholder of Central Life, and anybody who was a stockholder, they could be elected to the board of directors, then, and you could be elected for president, and it was—Central Life is a long story. I think—oh, he came to Central Life, not as the president. He came as secretary-treasurer, because then he did a lot of advancing after Mr. Rogers died.

CR: Was Mr. Rogers president when you first started, or was—was Ed Davis already president when you started?

GC: No. Ed Davis came after Mr. Rogers, and Ed Davis came after Mr. Martin. That was in the later years. Mr. Martin was president and Mr. Davis was secretary-treasurer and after Mr. Martin decided not to run—that's when Mr. Davis became the president and the Douglas (inaudible) as secretary-treasurer.

CR: Was there a kind of—a sense among the directors of Central Life that what Ed Davis had gone through was something that they supported? Were they interested, in any kind of direct way, in breaking down barriers and helping to fight those kinds of injustices? There's something that I've read about Central Life where they hired people, teachers who were fired during the strike—

GC: Maybe so.

CR: —which is an unusual thing for a company to do, because a company is usually just concerned with profit.

GC: The thing that Mr. Rogers was—he was a good-hearted person, so it could be, but I don't—

CR: But there wasn't anything like that that you remember?

GC: —but I don't—no.

CR: Um, Mary McLeod Bethune had an involvement with Central Life. How much do you know about that?

GC: All right. Mr. Rogers died. After Mr. Rogers died (sounds of something striking microphone) Miss [Mary McLeod] Bethune was vice president which meant, automatically, she became the president and Miss—(inaudible) Martin, he worked—he was under Mr. Rogers administration, but he left the company. So after Mr. Rogers died, and Miss Bethune was made president—Miss Bethune was an educator. She was not an (inaudible). So she decided that she needed an administrative assistant—someone. So, evidently, somebody recommended Mr. Martin who had worked there before, and Mr. Martin came to work for Central Life as—to me he was more like an adviser, that's the way I look at it, to Mrs. Bethune. But politics, to me, sometimes, I feel that politics can be dirty. (laughs) (inaudible)

CR: Do you want me to turn it off again?

*pause in recording*

SG: Now we're back on the air.

CR: How did Central Life become so successful? And then, what caused it to lose that, that success? I mean, there was—it was formed in, like, twenty two [1922] or something?

GC: April 22, 1922.

CR: And then, within some period of years there were branches all over Florida—

GC: Yes.

CR: —and—

GC: Thirteen. At that time we had thirteen branches, and sometime we had this office under all the district offices. We had Bradenton, Daytona Beach—and Fort Lauderdale and Miami, at one time, were together. Then they separated, because, you know, they were growing. And, I think—I don't know if the downfall was some of the presidents that were trying to do something and they came of age and they retired. But years ago, you could not—a colored agent, they couldn't sell life insurance to whites. And—

CR: So it was a Jim Crow market until—?

GC: I think that's really down—you know, when they came and said that everybody could sell to everybody, I think that's when it came. And, see, this was a small company and you couldn't compete with Metropolitan [Life Insurance Company] and all of those—

CR: What did the economics—?

GC: —agents come and they offered you this and you'd go ahead and get it. Now, if you—a small company, you don't have that particular policy.

CR: Right. Yeah.

GC: See, where you can get this policy can do this and you can borrow that and all of that. So, we were limited.

SG: Was there anything in particular that you can think of that made it as successful as it was in the black communities all over Florida?

GC: Let's see, going back to this, also, that—tell you this, before it gets away from me—Central Life was instrumental. Central—

SG: Central Park Village?

GC: Yes. They were instrumental in helping people buy homes there. (sound of something hitting the microphone) The white banks, they were not giving any money to the colored for their homes.

CR: Okay.

GC: So, Paul Smith—Smith Construction Company—they came to Central Life and they agreed that Central Life would take the mortgage. So whenever someone wanted a home, Paul Smith, they would bring the application to Central Life after they'd review it. And they had three—they had conventional [mortgages], they had VA [Veterans Administration], and FHA [Federal housing Administration].

CR: So they were operating as, like, a savings and loan, or—?

GC: Well, it was a—

CR: —they were giving mortgages?

GC: Yes, taking mortgages, taking mortgages.

CR: Did they, sort of—

GC: So they helped a lot of people here—in fact, they took the mortgage on this house. And I was working in that department.

SG: (laughs)

CR: What about businesses? Were they involved in helping people get started in business, like businesses on Central, or other small business?

GC: Well, they would help them if they had any property, like if someone had some property and maybe they want to start a business, but anyway, they put up their—

CR: Collateral.

GC: They put up the property against their mortgage and once they did that, they didn't—we had the contract on that building, so they could do things that they wanted. They could say, I want this for that, and after we'd get the money, they could do whatever they wanted. So you could have—but the main thing we had bad was they didn't pay. After a certain time we'd foreclose—

CR: Right. Right, you—

GC: But they would give them a lot; they were very lenient when it came to foreclosure.

CR: There was something—you were talking before about the McCollums, and I had an interview with the Lopezes where—and, um—

GC: Paul.

CR: —Clemente Maribel, and Frank and Ferman and Lydia Lopez.

GC: Yeah.

CR: One of the things that, I think it was—Clemente said that Charlie Moon used to buy insurance policies on people that—you know, people who'd come into his saloons and

stuff, and he didn't explain that. And I don't know that Central Life was where he had those policies, but—

GC: No, I don't think so.

CR: —but I wondered if you ever heard anything—

GC: No.

CR: —about that?

GC: Let me put it this way: during the time that I was at Central Life I didn't hear anything.

CR: But Charlie Moon was in business during that time—

GC: Oh, yes.

CR: —you knew about Charlie Moon, and—

GC: Yes. Right there, down the street from where the office was.

CR: Does he—was he a stockholder in Central Life?

GC: No. No.

CR: But the McCollums were?

GC: Yes.

CR: What was, uh—how was that regarded? I mean, they were famous *bolita* guys.

GC: Well, sometimes what happened—I don't know—there's (inaudible) they got in there, but if someone had some stock—they'd sell blocks. They'd say somebody has two hundred, three hundred shares, and, you know, it was—even though they didn't cost that much then, the majority of people, maybe they couldn't afford to buy that. And these people, they had the money, and I don't know whose fault now, I don't remember. I knew then, but I don't remember now.

CR: So, it's a public company and they could buy stock and—?

GC: Yes. Just like—and this is the way they would do it. I have two hundred fifty shares of stock and I don't know what I'm going to do, and then I say, “Cheryl, you have money. This would be a good investment. Can you buy these two hundred fifty shares?” And I get it and sell it to you. See? So the company didn't have any control because that was my stock and I could sell it to who (inaudible). So I sold mine to Cheryl. Cheryl has

the stock certificates signed by me showing that this stock is to be transferred to Cheryl Rodriguez, or whatever it is—

CR: And then she can vote with her (inaudible)—

GC: —and then she goes to the office, she takes that and presents that and the secretary has the right to transfer those to her. And they were not concerned how much she—if you paid one hundred dollars, if you paid ten cents for it. The mere fact that you did have that contract—and that's the way they did. So right now I really don't know who they got the stock from, but it so happened that they had the money and with whoever was, they needed it bad, so they went ahead for—they didn't care who.

CR: So they were investors, and investors were needed and—

GC: That's right.

CR: But then—

GC: So it's not that, you know, the money, as far as (inaudible) was buying (inaudible)—well, I would doubt it (CR laughs), but it had—no, no, but it would—I don't know if it was in my company, but I don't have any (inaudible).

CR: But you never heard of anything like that?

GC: No, I never heard of anything.

CR: 'Cause I had never heard of anything—

GC: No (inaudible)—

CR: —like that and I'm trying to figure out what the angle on that would be, 'cause it's every—I mean, unless you're going to hasten the day that you get to collect (laughs), which would ultimately, I think—if somebody wanted to buy an insurance policy on me, and had that reputation, I wouldn't let 'em do it.

GC: (inaudible)

CR: So there must be something else that had to be crooked, because, uh—

GC: Somebody—the way I understand it, somebody would have to sign the other person's name, because sometimes they say, Man, I want this, and maybe they don't know what they're doing.

SG: Yeah. Yeah. (inaudible)

GC: Because I can't see.

CR: But the way Clemente described it was that he would pay the premiums and he was the beneficiary and there was—

GC: When they died, he got the money.

CR: —just, sort of—but anyway, I just—that was an odd insurance question that I thought I would ask you in case you knew about it.

GC: No, not that I knew of.

CR: With the gamblers on Central Avenue—and there were a number of them, Charlie Moon was not the only one—

GC: Right.

CR: —but—

GC: And Clemente's brother, Chick<sup>1</sup>. He was a—he was—

CR: I mean, his brother told (laughs) me that also.

GC: He told you all that?

CR: Oh, yeah.

GC: Yeah. That's what I heard.

CR: But he was also—like, he was the sponsor of the Tilt<sup>2</sup> and was involved in civic kinds of things. I mean, it's a hard—I have trouble—

GC: Chick?

CR: Yeah, Chick.

GC: Yeah. But, see, there's—this sort of business that they were in, it was just like an investment. The only thing that was illegal was (inaudible) like the *bolita* thing, 'cause *bolita* helped a lot of people. (all laugh). (inaudible) and they used to (inaudible) and they come right around. They used to have it every night. And the big three were (inaudible).

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Oral History interview with Francisco and Ferman Lopez, Lydia Lopez Allen, and Mirabel Clemente, Ferman Mirabel was nicknamed "Chico" by Charlie Moon, and he thereafter called himself Chick.

<sup>2</sup> Tilt of the Maroon and Gold, a football game played by Bethune-Cookman College.

And they were the ones, and they had it, you know, every night. And they'd pay you—one time it was three dollars for five cents. Four dollars for—(laughter).

CR: It was good 'cause the—

GC: Yeah, yeah, that was way back there and they had the combination and you'd play that and all of that, so it was a common thing.

CR: So, the Blanco brothers, they were gamblers in Ybor City, right?

GC: Mike and Ralph. Well, they used to sell. That's mostly what they did. They—

CR: They would sell the numbers?

GC: Yeah, and they'd call it *bolita* (inaudible). They'd sell the *bolita*, and what they'd do, they'd bank it themselves. And one time they were working for, like I said, for these other people, and they were getting, like, a cut or a commission. But at the—that was a common thing, I think. Because we heard during that thing—I don't know if it was during the twenties [1920s], but I remember they did a lot of killing (inaudible).

CR: Well, yeah. I mean, Charlie Moon, although that was later, that was, like—

GC: Oh, but I don't think Charlie Moon was a mob leader.

CR: —in the early forties [1940s]. You don't think he was what? (SG laughs)  
You gonna tell me about Charlie Moon? (all laugh)

SG: Turn it off?

GC: Okay.

*pause in recording*

GC: I would have the marker coming (inaudible).

CR: What kind of guy was Charlie Moon? What reputation did he have?

GC: I don't know anything (inaudible).

CR: He didn't have a—

GC: No.

CR: You didn't hear things about him, or—they used to say things, like, that he would feed hungry people during the Depression, and—

GC: Maybe for a special down here on Central, I know he—

CR: I heard another story about him.

GC: I know he was there a long time, 'cause I didn't like to pass by him. I would go on the other side, 'cause all those people be hanging around.

CR: Be hanging out.

GC: Yeah.

CR: Who used to be the—who were the people hanging out on Central Avenue? Were they longshoremen waiting for work, or—?

GC: I really don't know. I know—oh, God—where they had the Blue Room, some of them would come and say they want the Blue Room, or—what you call this, um, the Cotton Club. Now when I started with Gene and Dean and Vicki and (inaudible), you know, he came through, we would go to the Cotton Club. It was nice. We would, you know, we would go there.

CR: Oh, okay. What did you do there? Who did you see there?

SG: I heard, a lot, that celebrities used to come there, to the Cotton Club.

GC: I don't remember seeing anything, (CR laughs) but it was nice. And another place they said was nice, but I didn't frequent there, was the, uh, (sound of vehicle passing) (inaudible).

CR: You didn't go there?

GC: No. This [when] I went there, that was during a time when there was, uh (inaudible) some people, when (inaudible) from the boy's place when it was across the street, (inaudible) from people, when he started, it was from the other side. Then he moved to the other side. But, no, I don't—

SG: So, you didn't go on Central very much.

GC: Mm. I went to the (inaudible)—sometimes, when I left work, if I wanted to see a movie, I used to go to the Lincoln Theater right after, you know, right after work. And from there to home. And another place that I had never been until I married the first time was the Apollo Ballroom.

CR: The Apollo?

GC: Ballroom. That was above Charlie and them's place. I forgot that there was someone who—I didn't go that night—I forgot who it was, but there was a benefit (inaudible). It

was during the time we used—we used to (inaudible) and (inaudible) was so hot (inaudible) people had to dress us in dresses and the dresses were shrunk (CR laughs) (inaudible).

SG: That was before air conditioning.

GC: Yeah.

CR: (laughs)

CR: In fact, the Lopez brothers said that Chick's was the first place on Central Avenue to have air conditioning. That was one of the big selling points. Um—

GC: Atlanta Life used to be right now (sound of vehicle passing) right there on (inaudible) used to be right there next—about two doors from the Palace Theater (inaudible).

CR: Do you know anything about the Lily White Benefit Society<sup>3</sup> or the Grand Union—?

GC: No.

CR: —with the Grand Progressive Pallbearer's Union<sup>4</sup>?

GC: No. Did you interview (inaudible)?

CR: No. I—that's—I want to interview her about that because I know that she was, uh—

SG: (inaudible)

GC: Yeah, she's been working there a long time. And the other lady was (inaudible) but the Lily White—see, (inaudible) I think.

CR: In other words, he was certainly the one who was the head of it. I think he started it. I didn't—for some reason I didn't think he was part of Central Life (sound of vehicle passing). I thought he was part of another group that was, sort of, the—

GC: Right. Right. Right.

CR: —competition with Central Life.

GC: When I started, I think his father was—they had the founders, but I understand, he put his father in it, but I understand that his father was not one of the founders, that he

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<sup>3</sup> Lily White Security Benefit Society, founded in 1935.

<sup>4</sup> Progressive Pallbearer's Grand Union

was one of the first people coming in. But they had a picture there and someone came and they took the minutes and the people who signed the (inaudible)

CR: Mm-hm.

GC: So I don't think that it—

CR: His name was not on it.

GC: I don't think so.

CR: Hm.

GC: And, you know, they'd regroup their (inaudible). I think some of that stuff went through (inaudible).

CR: Probably.

GC: You don't throw those things away, 'cause I kept those things locked and I wasted my time arranging them, all (inaudible).

CR: What? When they closed Central Life down?

GC: (inaudible).

CR: That hasn't been too long ago.

GC: I lost—I had a hundred and fifteen shares of stock.

CR: Oh, really?

GC: And I lost ten thousand dollars on it. (sound of large vehicle passing) There was a (inaudible) and I was spending my money and everything, (coughs) and after a year they come and send me a check (inaudible) and they didn't send me all the money, and somebody said, "I didn't even bother with trying to (inaudible) shares," because I said, "At my age, you know the big one (inaudible) charging me, charged me for that?" So I don't have one penny of worth of life insurance and I worked for the insurance company for forty-five years. And it's not the same if somebody—if somebody say, "Why don't you go?" I say, "I (inaudible)." They say, "Do you have anything to—to write before time?" You see, they ran us—they ran debt, I don't know how many millions of dollars.

CR: (inaudible). Yeah. Creditors get in line and—

GC: Sure.

CR: —policyholders don't—

GC: So they said, after reviewing, I didn't have any claim. I said, "Why?" And, see, the way I bought the stock, I bought the stock—I used to save money in the credit union. We had payroll deduction and every time I had a hundred dollars in there I would buy. You know, that's just unlawful. It really wasn't money that I got out at one time, but over the years it accumulated. Now there was some that I paid a hundred and twenty-five for. So, when—it was like—we'd say, We have this bunch of whatever price shares which was (inaudible), I would borrow the money from the credit union and then buy the stock. That was not a (inaudible) way of raising money. I didn't get that from no (inaudible). (CR laughs) But I've never been lucky. (laughter)

Now, I had an aunt who was lucky. But when she (inaudible).

CR: So what, actually, do you think, caused Central Life to fail? I mean, I know there were individuals, and there were actual, sort of, episodes, but in terms of just the general, uh, problems—

GC: Well, number one—

CR: —that caused it.

GC: Number one was when they started this (inaudible) was the, at least, before—it was hard, I think, for some of the colored to get good insurance with the other company. It's just—ever since we came up, the only thing I knew about was Metropolitan Life. And that's 'cause we had all, you know, all those insurance with 'em. I didn't even know they had a colored insurance company until I—when they called me (CR laughs) and told me you're here.

CR: "Because I worked there."

GC: Yeah. I didn't know, even right here in the city. I just didn't know. Then I found the (inaudible) worked in Jacksonville and I knew of the African<sup>5</sup>. I didn't know about Central Life. But I really think when, when—see, they started hiring. Before [that] they didn't hire colored, the white companies, so when they started hiring them, and they'd give 'em this big money, you couldn't hardly get any—you couldn't hire them to come and sell insurance for what we could pay them. So, then, there they go and there they ran, and if you don't have the people to sell it—

SG: Right.

GC: So that's one of the main things, when they did that—

CR: When they had more—

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<sup>5</sup> Possibly referring to the Afro-American Life Insurance Company, which was based in Jacksonville.

GC: —when they'd see—

CR: (inaudible)

GC: It helped on one side but it hurt on the other side—

CR: Yeah.

GC: —when they started letting them, you know, they could do that.

CR: Right.

GC: They had what they'd call this—the (inaudible). It was very, very profitable. You can do so many things with the policy.

CR: Right.

GC: But, see, the small company, they can't—we were (audio is warped and garbled here) we (inaudible) around seven million dollar (inaudible) and that's chicken feed.

CR: So the scale of—

GC: That's right. And, see, if they going over here to John, John (inaudible) they're coming over here to Joe, Joe won't give 'em five, and that's as much as (inaudible) he's not thinking about that and nobody knew it. We started going down. We had to close some of the branch offices.

CR: So, you think integration was the biggest part of it.

GC: I think so, when it come to that business. Not all, not all business, but I think it, it had a lot to do with it. And if you're going, and if you're going somewhere and they going to send some Russian to work for us, we couldn't afford to pay a salary like this, like the big ones paid.

CR: Mm-hm.

GC: And then they returned experience—Especially (inaudible) against (inaudible). So to me, one of the good (inaudible). 'Cause Mr. (inaudible) knew (inaudible) 'cause he started from the beginning and left. And some of the others, just like Ms. Bethune, she was an educator. She didn't know nothing about that. And Mr. Davis came in and he tried to do his best, and he did do pretty good, but his heart was really in education. And then he was in business. He got so that he had a Laundromat, and to this day (inaudible) (sound of vehicle passing). But, you have too much politics in this thing.

SG: Yeah.

CR: Seems like the company was kind of a community institution that had, you know, people came to it from leadership positions in the community then that was from other parts of—

GC: Of the state, yeah.

CR: —of the sector.

GC: And another thing that they did, they were instrumental in lending money to a group to buy the Central Hotel.

SG: To buy what?

GC: Central Hotel and Ballroom.

CR: That was like Pyramid—

(inaudible; everyone speaking at once)

GC: And then became to be called the Pyramid Hotel and Investment Company.

CR: Oh.

GC: So, Central Life was the one who lent them money.

SG: Okay.

GC: So this—even though some of the—some of the directors were part—also part of Central.

CR: That's what I was going to ask. Do you know who was in the Pyramid? I know that, Blythe Andrews<sup>6</sup> was in it. Or, at least, I think he was. Moses White, maybe?

GC: I don't know.

CR: There were a—

GC: My mind is not what it used to be. I think (inaudible) because we used to laugh at 'em because they had, um (sound of stomping foot twice) a radio program and he was talking and he'd say he's off in Virginia. Somebody'd say, "He's (inaudible)" (All laugh) like a cracker. And then this—

SG: (inaudible) Martin?

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<sup>6</sup> C. Blythe Andrews, Senior, owner of the *Florida Sentinel Bulletin* newspaper

GC: Yeah. Then, this Pyramid Hotel and Investment Company, they also bought—I can't think of this place. (Sound of vehicle passing) It was like a park, or something, that they bought.

SG: A park? Did you say park?

GC: Yeah. Or somewhere where they had picnics and things.

SG: It wasn't Rogers Park?

GC: No, no, no, no. It wasn't Rogers Park. And I'm forgetting, I never went but that's—I think it was during the time my father died and, in a way, (inaudible) I was grown, but if somebody died you wouldn't go here and you wouldn't go there. You know how it was.

CR: Right.

GC: So they had something one time, and I didn't go. I forget the name of it.

CR: When Martí-Maceo Society was torn down, the property was acquired by the Lily White Investment people. Did you know anything about that?

GC: No. No.

CR: Their involvement in the property that Martí-Maceo was on?

GC: No. I didn't know about it.

CR: Um, I know—I haven't been able to track down the details of it yet, either. I mean, I know that that was—

GC: I thought they demolished the building.

CR: Oh, they did. But I mean in terms of who developed that property afterwards, and who actually got the land that it was on.

GC: Because out of all the clubs that's gonna (inaudible) dirty dogs (someone laughs). We were the dirty dogs. Now, that's someplace we would go at night, when they had dances and things (sound of vehicle passing), we would go and, and they'd, "Let's go, let's go and watch the band!" And we'd go and stand across the street and they'd have this porch and we would just enjoy (inaudible) looking at the people dancing and say, "Hey, look at that." And, you know, holding hands, and all (inaudible) (CR laughing) (inaudible) waste time with that foolishness. They ain't gonna watch nobody dancing and all of that. And even at that time, I mean, they let us go. And it was—we weren't three blocks from where we lived. It was too strict (CR laughs). And I said, "If they ever had

been that strict with me, I would have never driven (inaudible) my husband. (CR laughs)  
When I look back, oh my goodness. (Sound of microphone being moved and rapped)

CR: (inaudible) Just a few more questions about Central Avenue. Um, there was a point  
where—and if you didn't go over there very much, it—

GC: Well, before you start talking, do you want to have a drink or something?

CR: Actually, that sounds really good.

GC: Okay.

CR: Just water is (inaudible).

*pause in recording*

CR: That's the most important part. What—

GC: Have any children?

SG: Mm-hm.

GC: How many?

SG: Four girls.

GC: Four girls! We have one girl. (Dog barking)

CR: One girl.

GC: No boys?

SG: I think (inaudible) actually have twins. (Dog still barking)

GC: (inaudible)

SG: Yeah, he worked on a number of different (inaudible) and when I (inaudible).

GC: (inaudible)

SG: My oldest one is twenty-three.

GC: Wow. You're (inaudible).

SG: I'm old.

GC: And see, you should be young like her. (All laugh). I tell you, Tina (inaudible) seventy-five this year (Dog barks, inaudible). If I make it.

CR: As time went by on Central Avenue—and if you didn't go down there very much you may not really be able to say too much about this, but it started to change. I mean, it must have started to change noticeably in the late fifties [1950s], early sixties [1960s], in terms of more empty buildings and things like that. Do you remember (doorbell rings) that? Did you have a sense of that? (Doorbell rings again)

GC: I don't know who (inaudible).

CR: There was a bank—or it wasn't actually a bank, it was a savings and loan. I think it was Frontiers, uh—

GC: (inaudible)

CR: Mr. (inaudible) was involved in that.

GC: And I (inaudible) stupid thing, you know when Harper started running for that, uh, they let him go, and I understand that (inaudible) he mentioned he was going to run for (inaudible) or something. (CR laughs) But if the man was building the thing up, and all of that, he (inaudible) (sound of vehicle passing) I'm quite sure it was going to be a big (inaudible) that had somebody—

CR: Right.

GC: —and he would still be guiding 'em. And they said, “Well, I'm going to, uh—I'll stay at this and that.” And he could guide the people and all that and see that they could be going okay. But these people—sometimes they hate to see if somebody goes up and on that account may mean—that's another thing. Maybe they would have been married if he hadn't been doing that (inaudible). 'Cause he had been doing that before. He was on other boards.

CR: Of the Central Life?

GC: Oh, yes. And I told him that day, I said, “And I need you to know, sir, you've let me down.”

SG: What did he say?

GC: Hm?

SG: What did he say?

GC: (Sound of vehicle passing) I've forgotten what he said (CR laughs), except he was the one, and in Central Life's case, the board left (inaudible) (sound of something striking

microphone). They didn't have enough people (inaudible) business (inaudible) something like (inaudible). They put several people on (inaudible) education. (Sound of vehicle passing) (inaudible) and so-and-so was this, just like, uh, when it came to, um, it were a man, he was a member of the board and he died, so someone said that he had left all of his stock to a nephew.

CR: Mm-hm.

GC: So they decided to put the nephew on the board. (CR laughs) and we come to find out he didn't leave all his stock to the nephew. (sound of vehicle passing) (CR laughs). He had to do all of the meetings—

SG: Oh, no.

GC: Wasn't that stupid?

CR: Yeah. So they didn't (inaudible)—

GC: (inaudible)

CR: —find out. They didn't do real good research to find out.

GC: No. And that's —

CR: (inaudible)

GC: —that's what happened with us. We have to face—we don't have too much (inaudible) new generation. You don't have too many people with business sense. You don't put somebody on a board just because this one said that, and he left his stock and all of that. You're going to put somebody who is qualified or who knows what we can do to make it something new and grow. But just because—say you put Mary Jane. Mary Jane don't know nothing about insurance, don't know anything about investment, don't know anything but to go and sit in the classroom and teach the kids. That's a good job. It's not bad.

CR: Right.

GC: I don't know if I wanted to teach nowadays. (inaudible) Well, anyway, my ambition was to have a (inaudible) in mathematics.

SG: You were good with the numbers, huh?

GC: I love to work with numbers. Yeah. (Sound of vehicle passing). But I couldn't make it. Some people figure I would go to school (inaudible). I didn't go to school because it was during the Depression and my mother couldn't afford it and I couldn't get a scholarship. The sponsor say, "I want you to go to (inaudible). Mrs. Thomas, I want you

to go to this (inaudible) school.” And the time came I’d want to (inaudible). No one. I did everything by myself. And this guy said, “(inaudible).” And I said, “No, sir.” I said, “I couldn’t get to NYU [New York University] or—” That was during the Depression and they had these scholarships that—it would be, like, fifteen dollars because—now, that job that I had, I told you, the Urban League, I started with a home demonstration (inaudible). They were the ones paying. The government paid sixteen dollars, or whatever it was, a month. I forget (inaudible) it was.

But if I would have gotten there—and my mother could afford it. But then, during that time (inaudible) today, and you didn’t have the money, they would tell you to go home. Now, why don’t—if they didn’t enough money to send me, to pay for the tuition, how in the devil am I gonna get home? See, they didn’t think that. It’s some old—one of those stupid things they don’t even know. Instead, I didn’t want to—oh, even one of the members of my family said I didn’t go to school because my mother didn’t want me—didn’t let me go to school because (inaudible). I said, “That’s the biggest lie.” (CR chuckles) That’s one time she was willing to do without me. Poor thing, she wanted me—the same thing with the piano. (Chuckling) (inaudible) the piano, but I did (inaudible) play long, long ago. (Sound of vehicle passing) The same way. And I didn’t have a piano. That’s when I used to go to (inaudible), tell you?

SG: What?

GC: I would go up to his house—

SG: Oh, that’s right. Yeah.

GC: —every day, by myself. I would go there every day, Susan, to practice. (CR chuckles) My mother would send me. And then, when I left, most of the time, when I would leave, uh (inaudible) that was way back there when (CR chuckles) we’d take—we’d take company (inaudible), you know, and they were on the porch when I would leave. But every day I’d go over there, except Saturday and Sunday. Every day. (inaudible) busy playing (inaudible). That’s another thing I wanted to do (CR laughs). And I didn’t (inaudible).

SG: You missed all these things that you wanted to do.

GC: No. She didn’t let me.

SG: Well—

GC: No, that’s why—

SG: —but you did do a lot.

GC: I can’t skate. (All laugh)

CR: It's never too late.

GC: I can't ride a bicycle. I can't swim. That's too much love.

CR: But you had a good career at Central Life.

GC: Oh, I did.

CR: What was it like to work there?

GC: Well, we had it pretty good. I was a secretary for a long time. You see my things on the wall?

CR: Yeah.

GC: Yeah. I was a first secretary until I—if I moved up in Central Life, there was too much (sound of a vehicle passing) (inaudible) and I didn't, um, I got out (inaudible). I stayed on the board but I didn't—I wouldn't manage for Mr. (inaudible). You have to care for it. My husband was unable to understand that. But (inaudible).

SG: You must have.

CR: What kind of impact would you say Central Life had on the community? What was its contribution to the community?

GC: Well, one main thing during that time, it was hard for us to get jobs and things—they contributed. They contributed to that. Because—and they would use (inaudible) the vacation time and they started giving jobs to the kids, like in high school and that. We'd bring 'em in and have 'em, just like we did typists (inaudible) and we had them working. We had that program. Because there were several girls there that came—Vicki was one of 'em and Mildred, Mildred (inaudible). Now they have gone off. And there was another—I mean, but several of them were nice little workers too, that came in through, during the summer. 'Cause we did—we used to have the register. I wasn't an officer then but I was just there, you know. I was secretary, and then, cause I started as a clerk/typist, and then a stenographer, and then as, like, secretary. So then I became an officer—

CR: (inaudible)

GC: —yeah. They were—they—

CR: So they provided jobs for the people.

GC: Yes, during the summer, they did.

CR: And, you also said that, um, the fact that they helped people with their mortgages.

GC: Oh, yes.

CR: That was real important.

GC: Yeah. That's (inaudible)'s Construction Company because those people out there, if they would have been for Central Life during that time because they had a hard time for the—because this Carl Smith Construction Company, that was a white company. And here—they couldn't get the whites—the banks to take the mortgage. And that's when they came to Central Life.

SG: Do you think that, in general, that the black community was supportive of Central?

GC: I don't know.

SG: You don't know?

GC: Unh-uh.

CR: Well, a lot of people did business with them.

GC: Yes, and especially some of the ugly, ugly, ugly things—

CR: Did people keep their policies with Central Life even if they could get a better policy elsewhere out of a sense of loyalty? Do you know of cases like that?

GC: No, I don't, but a lot of them kept—see, the problem was (sound of vehicles in background) (inaudible) because some of those people, they had that. And if you had a good agent, somebody—you had a five cents policy, a ten cents policy—I just came across, after my aunt died, I came across two policies that she had on one of her sons, the youngest son, one was a thousand (inaudible). And do you know there's still something in it? And he was close to seventy-nine, and during that time he was sixty-seven years old.

And I called the people and they'd say (inaudible) what. And then, at the time, it was supposed to be for—he wanted whatever you were going to give him now. I'd say, "You say you don't have insurance. If—you're going to get more that way even though you are not going to get it. But whoever's responsible for your burial, that's a help towards it." And they still have, you know, way back there, they had all those five cents and ten cents policies.

But Central Life was good, I think, it was good also to the community 'cause whatever they had, we would always contribute. And they had different (inaudible). And, I mean, we had several other people, um, they had the United Way—several of them had said, when we (inaudible, tape skips) moved—

CR: So they would get involved with things like that as well?

GC: Yes. And if—they (inaudible) quite a while on the budget committee, and then when that came out I was involved board. 'Cause then I went with the Helping Hand commercial, that's Miss Storm. Miss Storm took me and there was no (inaudible), poor thing, and they weren't saying a thing. (CR laughs) And I did that. I kept the—they had a bookkeeper, but I did the payroll, wrote the checks, and (inaudible) every five or ten minutes (inaudible) she got this, and I didn't never get a penny from them.

CR: So, did they think Central Life was donating those services, or did they—?

GC: No, no, they didn't think they was—Miss Storm was the secretary-treasurer of Central Life, Andrew Storm was the president of the board for the Helping Hand Day Nursery.

SG: Naturally, she asked you—

GC: So, the treasurer would have been sick, so they—she told (inaudible) she knows somebody who would go and do it. And I—and she probably (inaudible). So—and I told her, I did the payroll (inaudible). I said, “Miss Storm, you said that (inaudible) they didn't give me a (dog bark) (inaudible).” (inaudible) Miss Cox. I said, “They didn't give her a penny.” And do you know (inaudible) (sound of vehicle passing) (dog barks)?

***pause in recording***

GC: (Inaudible) turn it back on again.

CR: I want to ask you one more thing. Um, it seemed as if the NAACP and Central Life have a lot of connections. You were—you did something with the NAACP, didn't you?

GC: Never.

CR: Vicki Caseus—

GC: Vicki was.

CR: Okay. She may be the one I'm thinking of.

GC: Yeah, Vicki was.

CR: Or you had, like, David (tape skips) (inaudible) involved with the NAACP, and—

GC: Oh, yes, for years and years did he finally turned it loose. And Bob<sup>7</sup>—and Bob's wife Helen, she was—one time, she was over me. She was—the one that used to be (inaudible) over that, from Mims, Florida, but they killed him. To this day they don't know who did it. And that was from the same time that Bob's wife was here. And that's when Bob took the job, when they killed this man.

CR: Of Harry T. Moore?

GC: Right. Right. That's him. Yeah, that's when Bob took the job. And I don't know if that's why Helen met him or what (inaudible), 'cause Helen came from Mims to work for us.

CR: I see.

GC: That's when she—

CR: She worked at Central Life?

GC: Yes.

CR: Oh.

GC: That's when she came from Mims to work for us. Yeah, we had quite a few. And I had—I have her (inaudible) one of them used to write me and the other one that I helped, so that made me feel good. But you can always find a rotten egg. (All laugh). Mm-hm.

CR: Sometimes it doesn't (inaudible).

GC: But it don't bother me, because one out of a dozen, if you got a rotten egg, that's not bad. Yeah, but Mildred and them have done good. Mildred (inaudible) and Eleanor and the other one, she was from here, I don't know—what was her name? I can't think of it. But I don't know what has happened to her. She wrote me when she married, even when she went to Washington. She (inaudible) my godson, and one night both of them called me and this and that and the other. The next time they broke up. Then she sends me she married and sent her mother to Puerto Rico because she was here with her father. But her mother was Puerto Rican.

CR: Oh, okay.

GC: And she was going to Blake [High School].

SG: I didn't know that.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Saunders, field secretary for the Florida NAACP. His wife, Helen Strickland Saunders, was president of the NAACP's Tampa branch.

GC: It was Cynthia. Cynthia what? I couldn't think of it. But she went up there and she finally married and she sent me the picture and all that.

CR: And she didn't—and she worked at Central Life?

GC: Yes. That's one of my girls. And that's why I told you that during the summer program how we would get them coming in. Yeah, now that's a good thing they had. Yeah. (inaudible) One time we had three Cynthias.

SG: So, you say you kept a lot of the records—well, maybe not records, but you kept a lot of papers or (inaudible) (tape skips) different, um—what's the word I'm trying to say?

CR: The mementos, or—

SG: Yeah. You kept mementos from there, from Central Life.

GC: Yes, I have some.

CR: Do you have any photographs of the—well, what we really need are things that the Central Avenue, when it was on Central Avenue.

GC: I cannot help you with it because I wasn't working then. And on Central—the last thing we had on Central Avenue was a branch office, which I told you was two doors from Rogers. And this (inaudible) you were talking about his daddy, he had the bookkeeping place.

CR: Okay.

GC: And that's—Vicki and I, we were—when we'd get off from work, we would drive with him on to there. Because he had the bookkeeping place, and then especially during income tax, we would—

CR: So you worked, sort of, extra during then?

GC: Oh, yes. Mm-hm. We worked two hours. We would get off at 4:30 and we'd drive with him and we started from five until seven. That's the night I told you I was standing there and the woman—

SG: (laughs)

GC: (inaudible) What an experience. (SG laughs)

CR: Is there anything else that you think we ought to know about, about Central Life and how it fit into the community and how it made a contribution, or what was distinctive about it?

GC: Well, not only did, uh, during the summer, but they also had some—(inaudible).

CR: So they'd have, like, two—

GC: So they were interested in the youth. Trying to keep them off of crime.

CR: Do you think that maybe that was a reflection of the fact that teachers were involved in Central Life, that there was more of an awareness of the youth issue because of that, or—

GC: Maybe so.

CR: Or because they were aware of the need for trained people?

GC: I really don't know about—(inaudible). I know we tried to help the youth every summer. Every summer we would get that.

CR: Well, we have taken a lot of your time, Grace (inaudible).

GC: I know. (inaudible) feel so good. You know what I've been doing? Sometime I sit there and look at the moon a little, too—

*end of interview*