

Charles Lewis

Interviewed by Paul Gabriel

San Francisco, 1961 ---

CRH, SIR, Tenderloin, Night Ministry, Haight Ashbury

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(This transcript is taken from a copy of a video tape. There were certain omissions during the transfer from video to cassette tapes and are noted below)

Transcribed: Loren Basham

Charles Lewis: It won't hurt the chair, but if you sit on the arms, the chair will slip on you.

Paul Gabriel: Oh, really.

CL: Right, that's what was happening.

PG: Tell me your name? So the people out there....

CL: Charles Lewis.

PG: When were you born?

CL: January 10, 1931.

PG: So in 1960 you were about 30 years old.

CL: Well 1964 is when I came to San Francisco.

PG: Oh, you came to San Francisco. Where were you prior to that?

CL: Prior to that I was an assistant pastor in a congregation in Des Plaines, Illinois for about a year and a half and prior to that I was an associate secretary with our National Youth Office in Philadelphia.

PG: When did you enter the ministry?

CL: Well, actually, I'm trying to say, when I graduated from seminary, I was elected to be an associate secretary in our National Youth Office. But at the time there was a rule in the Lutheran Church that said if you went into an administrative position directly from seminary you would not be ordained. So it wasn't until I had my first call, which was as an assistant pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Des Plaines that I was ordained and that was on December 17, 1960.

PG: So you were 29?

CL: Right.

PG: And when you said you went to Des Plaines it was just because you were sent there, because there was an assignment you went?

CL: The way the call system works in the Lutheran Church is that a congregation is looking for a pastor or an assistant pastor and the bishop then can suggest names. In my particular case I had already served that parish while I was in seminary. I went to seminary in Chicago. And so that was my field work assignment for the 3 years I was in seminary and was natural then for them to ask me to come back. And after having been there for a year and 9 months then I resigned and was 3 months without a call and that's when I received the call here to come to San Francisco to develop my mission parish for the Lutheran Church at that time.

PG: Why did you resign? Just because you were no longer interested in the job or...?

CL: Well that's a much longer story.

PG: Okay.

CL: Actually what happened is a conflict develop between the senior pastor and myself. And of necessity then I was asked to resign. He also resigned.

PG: Okay, sounds like that's a whole other story.

CL: That's another whole story, right.

PG: Okay.

CL: I don't mind telling but I am not sure it's relevant to what you are doing here.

PG: I'm just curious. Was the.... Let me just ask these questions and then you tell me whether or not you think it's relevant. Was the conflict theological or was it administrative or was it personal?

CL: I think it probably was personal. Briefly what happened is that I went there and I was, if you want a kind of fair haired boy, I had been there as I said in my 3 years in seminary doing field work and had done an excellent job working with their youth group. And then having gone to our national church to an administrative office there, it was natural to me to go back there. But conflicts soon developed and I believe it was really between the pastor's wife and myself. And so what happened is subtle things that I was not aware of, as young as I was, like for example when I first went there I stayed with them. Their son was in college and so I stayed in his room up in the attic. Well, I have always been a night person so what happened is that I would come down go to the office at 11 o'clock in the morning. While the senior pastor, he was up at 7:30 and he was behind his desk at 8:30. And so after having been there for a month and looking for a

home or an apartment, what happened is that I came down one Friday and the pastor's wife said to me, well, isn't this nice. It seems strange that the senior pastor has to be at his office at 8:30 but you are just going in now. And I began to realize, whoa, something's not right here. And there were other little things along the way then. I had some money at the time and so I bought a house that happened to be for sale at a very reasonable price because the woman's husband died and she wanted to sell it quickly. And so I bought the house, but it happened to be located on one of the most wealthy streets in the city. It was a moderate house, but it was just where it was located.

PG: Okay, this is all falling into place for me then. You rise late, you live in the lap of luxury....

CL: Exactly.

PG: You're young.

CL: It began to look as though I was trying to take over the congregation, which was not at all part of it. The result was that I was that I reorganized the Sunday School but that created a conflict so that the senior pastor went to the church council and accused me of insubordination in the church council because they had suggested that we not follow the national guidelines. And it just made sense to me to follow the national guidelines unless I could be given a good reason why not. There wasn't any good reason so we just went ahead. There was another case where a young woman who I had started giving confirmation tests and developed a 2 year confirmation program. The result was that one of the young women failed the test and she was devastated. So I suggested that maybe she, I could take her home, which I did. And we talked about it and suggested that maybe she'd like to drop over to my place some Saturday afternoon and we could talk about it further. Well it turned out at that time I had a young man from the congregation living with me because he had gotten into trouble with juvenile authorities. What happened is that she came by on Saturday and when he answered the door she panicked and started to run away. And I went after her and said, hey look it's alright we can still talk. And she came back and I asked her to call her parents because we were actually going to go for a walk in the forest preserve with this young man's mother. And so that's what we all did. Well, later on she came by and left a note pinned to my door that essentially I had discovered that you're friends cannot be my friends and I am sorry for what happened in the forest preserve. Well nothing happened in the forest preserve. We picked up leaves and we walked logs. We were all together all at the same time. Nothing happened. But that note was on my desk and the senior pastor found it and made a copy of it and returned it to my desk without telling me and finally what happened next is that he called in a couple of church councilmen to accuse me of immorality with this young woman in the forest preserve. They couldn't believe the story and they said, we just can't believe this of pastor Lewis so end of the story. But it turned out, while they were going to his office that night on this more or less secret mission, I met one of them and the subterfuge he had used to get them there was that there was a special meeting of the Christian Education Committee. It turned out that neither of these men were on the Christian Education Committee. So when I asked them in the hall I said there's no

meeting that I know of and then I went to the church councilman who was there and he found out what the meeting had really been all about. So then the next thing that happened is I, while Richard was still staying with me, and just before I was leave for Christmas vacation, I had a nightmare that the senior pastor was trying to kill me. I ended up leaping through the stained glass window in my office and running home and the next thing I knew I was lying on my bathroom floor with this white shroud coming down over the top of me and I suddenly screamed and sat straight up in bed. Richard was in the bed next to me and he said, what's happening. And I said it's okay, just go to sleep. Well by that time the church council got involved then because he had gone down to talk to the bishop and so we came to some terms until about April of that same year and that's when I preached a particular sermon and he asked if he could borrow the sermon, he would like to study it further. And he ended up taking the sermon down to my bishop and accusing me heresy. And there are only 4 ways you can get someone out of the ministry: heresy, death, insubordination, or, what's the fourth thing, immorality.

PG: And he had tried....

CL: He had tried more things that happened by the time I was....

PG: Except for death, right?

CL: Except the death. So the result was that I was asked to resign by the bishop and that is what I did and.... There were some funny parts to it. For example, he accused me of heresy on Tuesday and I met with an assistant to the bishop on Wednesday and he said Chuck I read you sermon there's nothing at all wrong with it. Obviously you have problems with the senior pastor. The funny part about it was that that Saturday was when I was to go down and deliver a theological lecture to all the vacation bible school teachers in the entire Chicago area, and here I had been accused of heresy on Tuesday and I was delivering a theological lecture for all the Sunday School material that they would be using during that summer. The irony and all that sort of thing.

PG: You said that when you, when you were in seminary you did field work and then later when you were, I think you said....

CL: Same congregation.

PG: ...Associate secretary, is that the name?

PG: Right.

PG: Or title. And then you continued that and then you came out here and they asked you to set up a mission and it also sounds like when you were in Des Plaines you also were doing some kind of youth counseling. Can you talk about why for various, that was a focus for you in the ministry for you? Why did you chose that, how did you get involved in that?

CL: While I was in seminary, how I got involved with the Luther League of America, is what it was called then, and that was a branch of the Lutheran Church which was call the United Lutheran Church in America, ULCA. It has since merged and there has been another merger since then. But basically this represents the more progressive aspects of the Lutheran Church compared to Missouri Synod which is much more conservative. How I got involved is while I was in seminary I simply realized that there were materials coming out for youth groups and I was in charge of the youth group in Des Plains. So I started to use these materials and got the idea of developing a whole packet of materials where this could be used universally to have retreats for young people. And I submitted these materials to the national office and the result of that was that they were just starting, had just had one year of an intern program. So they invited me to go to Columbus, Ohio and meet with them and discuss producing this packet of materials to develop a retreat and at the same time I was interviewed about becoming the next field associate, which would be my internship from seminary. And so I spent my internship with the Luther League of America and while I was there did such a commendable job that at that time the organization was run by youth and not by adults. Youth going up to like the age of 25. At their national convention that year then they elected me to be an associate secretary upon graduation from seminary. And so when I graduated from seminary I went back and was on the national staff then as associate secretary with the Luther League of America developing program materials for the national church, was in charge of that they called their Caravan Program where young people would go out into their congregation and assist the congregation to develop its youth group, youth missionary program which was kind of an evangelistic tool where young people would go out into congregations and canvass the neighborhood to prepare a congregation for entering into a new field of mission. The professional youth workers conference, I organized that, and that was a national conference that was produced in Columbus, Ohio. And so I was very much involved in youth work and it was natural for me to go back then to Des Plains when what happened is a merger took place and part of the political shenanigans behind the scene at that time was that in the new church, which was then to be called the LCA, Lutheran Church in America, that there would be a new youth group on the national level would be adult run and not youth run. And none of the staff from the old ULCA would be permitted to be retained. So that was all the political thing that happened behind the scene.

PG: Heads roll.

CL: Right. It had nothing to do with the job we were doing or anything, it was just part of the politics and so that's why I left the Luther League of America and then I have already said why I left Trinity in Des Plains.

PG: Also, when you came here, this was a chance for you to do what you had been doing earlier.

CL: No not exactly. What happened was once I resigned from Des Plains, I was resigned without a call. And I learned later that that's not what you are supposed to do. However that is what I did and for me it was like a love affair, when its over its over.

You say thanks it was great and you turn your back and you walk away. But the fact is at that same time you see I also was the advisor to the Synotical, which is a geographical area Luther League in the Chicago area. So I came back from Pittsburgh which was my home for a meeting with that group of youth and at the same time there was another conference taking place of 14 black clergy, the only black clergy in the Lutheran Church at that time, or in the LCA, and the result was that I came back and attended that conference as well and met one of the individuals of the national church who was in charge of what was called our Board of American Missions. And he's the one that offered me the opportunity to come to San Francisco and either to be in a congregation in Hunter's Point or to develop a mission congregation here in North Beach. And I chose to come to North Beach and that's how I got here.

PG: Why is that? What did you find attractive about it?

CL: Oh, well one of the things, there were 2 things probably. One was that at the time I had just read some materials about the beatnik community and North Beach was known as the bohemian area of San Francisco at that time. What the church didn't realize, usually the church is a number of years behind in all of these things, but they didn't realize that the last beatnik essentially left North Beach in 1959. Or at least that whole group that met on a regular basis down at various bars and restaurants here on upper Grant Avenue. I came in '64. It's true that Ferlingetti still had his bookstore and still does today. In fact the beatnik element as it was known or coalesced at that time had already more or less disappeared. The other thing was that he said to me, Chuck I understand there are a number of homosexuals in the area and we have never, the church has never really found out how to work with them. Why don't you see what you can do. I came here then, I chose to come here rather than Hunter's Point simply because it just sounded more interesting to me.

PG: Like a whole new field.

CL: Right.

PG: And it was challenging?

CL: Mmhuh.

PG: You can fact check this for me, but I have been told by people that I interviewed that Grant Avenue in the late '50s and into the early '60s had coexisting, next to each other, two different worlds. There were places that homosexuals went to and then there were places that sort of beatnik like people went to and often the twain didn't meet but they would go to one bar versus another bar, that there was not.... But first of all there was a lot of Italians around as well, specifically on Grant Avenue. I don't know how true that is. I mean this was their feeling, it was their bars or their establishment and our establishments.

CL: See in the beatnik community, there were a number of gay people. Or bisexual people. When we talk about Jack Kerouac as far as I know he was married, but he was gay. There were a number of other beatnik types like that that were either gay or bisexual. But it was sort of the forerunner of the Haight Ashbury scene is what it was. Where there weren't any labels. You just met somebody and if you ended up having sex fine, if you didn't that was alright too. You just kind of went with the flow. There were some gay bars here in North Beach. Paper Doll was over on Union Street.

PG: Copper Lantern.

CL: Yeah. There was Jackson's over here, I think it was on Broadway.

PG: Jackson's kind of closed, just closed by the time you got here.

CL: Yeah, Jackson's was closed by the time got here. The Black Cat was closed by the time I got here. It closed I think in '62.

PG: Three.

CL: Sixty-three, okay. Just the year before I came. There were just, there couldn't have been more than one coffee house that was still left in the area. And I don't even remember the name of it. The United Church of Christ had sent another minister here to develop a coffee house ministry and I can't remember his name or what it was at this point. But it had ceased, it had just ceased to exist when I got here. And I came here, you see, to develop and existing parish. The parish was meeting in a storefront down on Chestnut Street across from the old Safeway which is no longer there. Safeway move down to the Akron Center.

PG: Chestnut and what was the cross street?

CL: Chestnut and Columbus. That storefront is still there. It's a framing shop now. But that's where this mission was located. And the mission was started about 1952 by an elderly Italian Baptist minister and I don't know how much time you have here or how much longer we stay friends but that another crazy story. He graduated from the Presbyterian seminary here in Marin County and then because he was Italian and had been born in Italy, he went up the Iron Mountain country, which is the upper Michigan Peninsula and so on to develop mission congregations for the Presbyterian Church. Eventually he ended up in Ohio. He got involved in politics and was chair of the Democratic Party of Ohio and won the state for Calvin Coolidge. He was then invited to Washington to, for some political office there by Calvin and he turned Calvin down and said, no, I am sorry but my heart belongs to Jesus and I've got to continue to serve the church. Later on towards the end of the '30s he went back to Italy because otherwise he would lose his citizenship I guess. While he was there he visited the Waldensian Province in Northern Italy which was the only Protestant Province in Italy and the Protestants there told him that they were being persecuted by the Catholic. So he contacted

PG: That's not a new complaint right.

CL: He contacted Mussolini and he said, Mussolini old boy take these Catholics off my back. And apparently he claims that's what happened. And then he came back and established a mission in Birmingham, Alabama for the Presbyterian Church and eventually ended up coming back to San Francisco which was where he always wanted to be in the first place. And came to North Beach because that was the Italian point of emigration. Immigration here. And the result was that he started a mission and couldn't get support from the Presbyterians so he went to the Baptist Church and it was a Baptist mission for I think 9 years and it was supported by the First Baptist Church here in the City. And at that time they had a change of pastors and they decided they would rather send busses into North Beach and bus the people to First Baptist Church. Rather than to support him financially to do it here. The result was then that he went to the Mira Loma Reform Church and he got financial support from them for 6 months. And then he was with a group of clergy and heard the radio broadcaster Paul Meyer who is a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod broadcaster and said his heart was strangely warmed by this man with the result that he then went to the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church here and they supported him for 6 months. And at the end of that time they pulled out their support and then he got additional support from the Lutheran Church in America. And they supported him for 2 years. At the end of that time then is when he had 3 major heart attacks and I was asked then to come and take over this existing group of people numbering around 40. That's why I came to North Beach because I came here to be the pastor of essentially that existing mission congregation.

PG: So you weren't really a pastor of a regular church then? So to speak.

CL: It was a regular congregation, but it was a mission congregation. In other words it was getting support from the national church. They were paying my salary.

PG: Oh so you weren't tied to the local congregation in terms of financial support?

CL: No.

PG: I just wanted to ask you something about this, when I interviewed Robert Cromeey he was thinking about these ministers who initially got involved in CRH and that of course was very, very controversial, he said during the interview he began to realize that all of the ministers, the ones he could think of, Clay Caldwell, yourself, Lewis Durham, himself and Cecil, were people who were not tied down to a particular congregation in terms of having to report to them for salary. He was involved with the diocese and worked for the bishop. And the three ministers in the Methodist Church were coming out of Glide, which is also different. And your money came direct from the national. He said, I was wondering what you think about this. He said that maybe gave you, all of you, a little aura of breathing room that you maybe wouldn't have had if you were tied down to a particular congregation. We just don't like what you are doing; stop it. You shouldn't be, we're paying your salary. You should be ministering to us.

CL: Right and I always had the excuse, you see, that when you sent me there to work with the homosexual community that's what I am doing. And so I never got any arguments from the national church in terms of financial support.

PG: You never had a problem with that?

CL: No. And you see what happened is that very fall is when CRH was formed. I came in January, 1964. And in June of '64 is when Ted McIlvenna called the Mill Valley conference and out of that conference, that weekend conference, which was the first time that openly identified gays sat down with clergy for just a weekend together to tell our story. I was not at that conference, I had not been invited. But my local boss, Bill Black, was. By local boss, what I mean by that is that's not exactly true. At that particular time, every major Protestant denomination had what they called urban specialists in all the big cities around the country. So there were a group of urban specialists in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, etc. This was the days of civil rights and the white flight was already well underway. And so the question was how can we minister with the inner city and turn things around. And so Bill Black was the Lutheran man here from the Lutheran Church in America and Clay Caldwell represented the United Church of Christ.

PG: Ted McIlvenna was doing missionary work in the Tenderloin?

CL: Ted may have had two hats. He may have been the point man for the Methodist in the same category at the same time that he was working for Glide and was doing mission work in the Tenderloin. There were all of these executives that would meet together and try to plan cooperatively how the Protestant denominations could work in the inner city.

PG: Oh, so that's how you all got to know each other?

CL: And so Bill Black was the one who went to the conference. And he is the one who suggested my name for the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. And then Bill Grace was the Presbyterian and Bill Grace is the one that conceived the idea of the Night Ministry and he did an experiment in late 1963. And so the Night Ministry started in the fall of 1964 and CRH also started in the fall of '64 and Bill Black was like the point man or was the executive inner city man for the Lutheran Church suggested my name for both of those groups and that's how I got involved there. At the same time, I had the parish here and was responsible for the parish to Chicago, my boss was in Chicago. Then there was the West Coast regional. He was like, my boss in Chicago was like the western part of the United States and then there was a regional boss on the West Coast and I was responsible to him as well.

PG: Okay. A couple of questions that are follow ups. Tell me about the Night Ministry.

CL: Bill Grace, a Presbyterian minister, probably heard about a similar ministry in Chicago which was started by an Episcopal Priest. It preceded the Night Ministry here by one year. And essentially the idea was to have a night minister who would be on the

streets of the city from, at that time it was 10 o'clock at night till 6 o'clock in the morning. It would be lay people, like yourself, that would be answering a crisis hotline. And you would provide counseling and referral services for people who wanted to remain anonymous or didn't wish to go any further. At the same time the Night Minister was on the street and he would either, in the early days we would call back like every half hour or 45 minutes and find out what messages. After about a year we got our first beeper so we could be beeped on the street and call back and pick up the message and then went on call to anybody in the City. Herb Donaldson was one of our early volunteers.

PG: Working the phones?

CL: Working the phones.

PG: Were any of these other people early volunteers?

CL: None of the others that you mentioned, no. And that's how it operated then and essentially that's how it still operates today. The Night Ministry in Chicago ended after three years because the Night Minister there had a heart attack and died. And then there were many years when it ceased to exist and then there was a young man here, Tom Dobson, who was one of our volunteers and he decided he was going to seminary in Chicago, in the Methodist seminary. And I married him and his wife here and then they went to Chicago and Tom went to seminary. Tom ended up having to spend two years internship and the reason for that is that he was probably the first person to get out of seminary who used "fuck" in a sermon. And that did not go over too well and he ended up having to spend an extra year....

PG: For swearing.

CL: Right.

PG: Go to the principal's office for a year.

CL: That's right.

PG: When was that? Do you know what year that was?

CL: Probably in the '70s.

PG: Okay.

CL: And the result then was that he did get a parish in Chicago and during that period of time he convinced some people to get started a Night Ministry in Chicago's north side.

PG: Oh he sort of resuscitated?

CL: Right, he kind of resuscitated it. But 6 months later he died of liver cancer.

PG: How sad.

CL: Yep. But he got the initial machinery moving. Today, that's the largest Night Ministry. They have a budget of about a million and a half dollars. The longest continuous ministry of its kind is here in San Francisco.

PG: It's still going on?

CL: Still going on.

PG: Who else of these CRH ministers, did other ones also operate as Night Ministers, did you trade off with each other?

CL: No. The Night Ministry in the beginning Don Stuart, United Church of Christ, was the original Night Minister. And was simply one of his assistants. I worked for the first 2 years 1 night a week and then after that I worked 2 nights a week. Then when the Board of American Missions for the LCA pulled out their support from what was then called the North Beach Mission, I went to work also as a desk clerk at the YMCA Hotel and was a desk clerk there. The desk clerk there and what the parish could pay me and what the Night Ministry paid me for working 2 nights a week enabled me to survive for those 2 years. And after that then I was able to resign the Y and Don Stuart was getting tired and so he worked 4 nights a week and I worked the other 3 nights a week at half salary. And continued that until I became, Don resigned after 12 years, and I became full time Night Minister. And I served that for the next 19 years. I just retired last year.

PG: And as Night Minister, early when you were doing this early on when you were just sort of helping as assistant, when it was just getting started, what part of the City did you go into and what kinds of problems were you...?

CL: One of the first things that happened is that Well Don came to the City in August and got a house out in the Sunset area and then in September he went incognito into the City just looking around seeing what was happening at night. In October he made contacts with a variety of agencies. He rode one night with the Police Department, rode a night with the ambulance department, checked out Suicide Prevention which was operating then, it had just gotten started, and various other social agencies. And then starting the first Sunday night in November of that year is when both of us went on the street together. I was more or less in training with Don. And it was shortly after that that members of the gay community came to both of us and said, hey look if you guys are going to be working on the streets of the Tenderloin and other places where there are gay people you have to know what's happening. So we are going to take you bar hopping for 2 nights. And that's what they did.

PG: About what year was that?

CL: That was in the fall of 1964.

PG: So a lot was happening then?

CL: Yes.

PG: Cause then you had built a bridge to them and so they actually came to you and said take us seriously.

CL: That's where CRH came in here too. Because Don was not at that Mill Valley conference either. But Bill Black was and he was the one who got Night Ministry or was very much involved with getting Night Ministry started and suggested my name to Don and Clay Caldwell who was his representative in that colloquium. Bill Grace, the Presbyterian, is the one who got it started, but Don got the call. He had come from Lincoln, Nebraska. And how he had got out here is that he had read about the fact that they were going to start a Night Ministry in San Francisco and he wrote to, they call him president, similar to a bishop, and said I think this is a great idea that the United Church of Christ is going to be involved. With the result was, why don't you apply for the job and he did and Don was the one who was selected to be the first Night Minister. So he came out here, I was his assistant, but CRH, my name had also been suggested for a member of that first board. And that board was just developing then in October, November, December of '64. And so I had contacts then with the gay community in that respect, but was also an Assistant Night Minister. So that's when members of the gay community came to Don and myself and said, you two, if you are going to work in the community, you've got to go out with us to gay bars. We said fine, let's go. So they took us for two nights just bar hopping. It would be Polk or it on Turk Street was the main drag at that time. The Miracle Mile south of Market was just getting started. There were probably 2 gay bars out in the Haight Ashbury and so we went out there. Then we went to the lesbian bars

PG: Maud's?

CL: Maud's and then there was one just down the street on the corner, Bradley's Corner. Hank's Place, I don't know if it was operating then or not. But we didn't get there until later. So that's what we did. One of the first stories that Don tells about going into a gay bar was, I guess it was down on Ellis Street, and it was the, Pearls was in the back room and Rea Dante (sp?) and Charles Pierce used to play there....

PG: Gilded Cage.

CL: Gilded Cage that was it. The first night he went in the Gilded Cage he just sat down and the bar tender was at the other end of the bar and just eyeballed him. Didn't move. Finally after about 5 minutes he came down to the end of the bar and looked at Don and he said who the hell are you. And Don said I'm Don Stuart I'm the Night Minister here in San Francisco. What do you do? He said well basically we're a crisis intervention counseling service on call in the whole City from 10 o'clock at night till 6 o'clock in the

morning. We have no trips to lay on anybody we're just here to provide whatever help we can. What do you want to drink? I'll have a scotch and water. It probably was, if I remember drinks were about 50 cents back then. So Don paid him and drank his scotch and left. And the next night Don came in and the bar tender immediately came down to him and said, hey I check you out with the San Francisco Council of Churches today, you're OK. Drink's on the house tonight, what do you want. Scotch and water. And said, by the way we just opened up a back room here called Pearls and after midnight the kids from the streets here drop in, no alcohol is served of course. Why don't you drop around and see what you can do back there. So after midnight Don went back to Pearls and that first night 12 kids just lined up to talk to him.

PG: Gay kids who had run away?

CL: Yeah. These were runaways and also gay kids off the street that were hustling. So that's one of our entries then into the gay community at the time. And then of course what happened you see, Paul, is that when BART started operating on Market Street, see the old meat rack was between Mason and 7th on Market and also a little ways up Turk Street where Turk, Mason and Market all come together. So right around, there was a shoe store there on the corner. That was one of the spots for hustling but then up Market Street. Once Market Street was torn up there was no traffic and so the hustling then moved over to Polk Street. Moved up Turk and over to Polk. And that's when Polk Street started to open up. That was, see '67 to '69 is when it was supposed to be but Market Street never really opened up again until after 1971. It took 4 years instead of 2 years to put in BART and the subway and all the rest.

PG: So the hustling moved over to Polk around the mid '60s, late '60s?

CL: Right, late '60s. At the same time the Haight Ashbury you see was going through their whole scenario out there in the "summer of love" and the hippie movement and all that sort of thing.

PG: And by that time also by around '69-'70 the Castro was really starting to turn into what it is today. It was beginning to....

CL: It came after Polk Street.

PG: Yes. By '71 there are old magazines in the archives, local rags began, little newspapers, to come out of the Castro and start to talk about, they called it like the "new Polk Street."

CL: Right. The other interesting thing is, is that there was a residual group of kids in North Beach on upper Grant Avenue and on Broadway. About 1965 there was a couple of itinerate priests, self appointed priests, came to town and opened up what they called The Last Exit on Broadway. And this was a store front and kids would come in and they started to feed up to 200 kids every night, an evening meal.

PG: A new soup kitchen.

CL: More or less a soup kitchen. At the same time there were a lot of drugs going around. Mainly methamphetamines and pot. Very little heroin at the time. And certainly no crack cocaine or anything like that. The result was that these guys started to bate the police. So the police raided the place one night and got this great big jar that was sitting in the window full of white powder. And of course they thought it was meth or what have you and they confiscated it; turned out to be talcum powder. It was just their way of baiting the police. The guys, I swear, were suicidal because they could have had a good thing going. Finally what happened is that the Board of Health closed them down for not having a license, the health code. And that's how they got them. Once that happened and Mike's Pool Hall got raided and then there was another place right here on the corner that also got raided. Then the kids started to split from North Beach. At that time there were apartments along Grant Avenue, there were like 6 kids living in a room there. Or underneath the bushes up on Telegraph Hill. They were in sleeping bags and so on under the bushes there. These kids then split and about one-third of them went to the Haight Ashbury and the other two-thirds distributed themselves up and down the coast. Went to Venice West in Los Angeles and the North Beach scene virtually crashed overnight and the topless then took over. But about a third of those kids went to Haight Ashbury. Some of the kids that used to come to the North Beach Mission who were here still came back after the moved out to the Haight Ashbury. And so for the first two years out there, '67 to '69, everything was mellow and cool. Everything was great. And then the hard drugs moved in and that's when the mafia attempted to take over. Also when Joe Alioto was in office. It is my firm belief, although I have no real evidence of this, that it was the time when he was at the Nut Tree up here with a group of Mafioso related people and nobody knew what that meeting was all about. But it was also the time when the hard drugs came into the Haight Ashbury and one of the kids out there who used to come the North Beach Mission was taken to Marin County and his body was found at the base of a cliff: he had been murdered. A second kid, who also used to come to the Mission, he had been killed in his apartment and his arm was cleanly severed as though it were done with a scalpel or some professional who knew how to do this. And another kid was caught driving his car with the arm up in back window wrapped in a piece of plastic. He was heading South down the coast. As far as I know, neither of those crimes were ever solved. But eventually the cops came in and they got very hard nosed and the whole Haight Ashbury scene collapsed in terms of the mellowness of it and hard drugs came in and that's when the bars went up on the windows and all that sort of thing happened. But eventually the mafia then essentially was driven out. San Francisco has never been a heavy mafia town. Its had a lot of small racketeers going but its never had one center of power like Chicago Daly machine for example. The centers of power here have always been so diverse that they are always competing against each other and no one has ever been able to take over the City in recent years. So the mafia although it may have some activity here, its miniscule compared to what happens in San Jose for example.

PG: That's interesting. So, like you said, after a couple of years after you got here, 2 or 3 years, sort of a need to have the North Beach Mission as you understood it sort of

petered out because a lot of people you were supposed to be ministering to, these youth and even the gay people all began to move to other parts of the City or...?

CL: Well the young people the gay bars continued here for a number of years. One of the things that happened is after 12 years, that's not right, after 7 years, the national church pulled out its support of the North Beach Mission. That's when we got together then and formed what we called the Covenant Community. Which meant that each year we would write a Statement of Covenant as to how we saw ourselves in relationship to each other and to the world around us. And you pledged yourself to be involved in these various areas of ministry. One would be education, for example. That might mean that you would go on a parish retreat that we'd have. It might also mean that you would go to City College and take a course in literature. Anything that expanded your mind was education and you were able to come back and share that with the community. Social ministry. If you wanted to march in a civil rights demonstration, fine, but not everybody had to do that. Somebody said that's not my ticket, I'll write letters to Sacramento instead, that was their social ministry action. So we had these various areas that were covered and whoever signed that covenant was a member until the following Easter Sunday. And each Easter then we'd start over again with a new covenant and see new members. And we were able to do that for another 7 years. In the meantime, that community was accepted as an irregular, if you want, congregation of the Lutheran Church in America. And we continued that, so the North Beach Mission actually lasted 14 years and dissolved in 1976, no '78. But in 1976 is when I became full time Night Minister. And as part of that, you see, well one of the things we would do is after our worship service on Sunday we'd go to one of the gay bars around the area for brunch because it was one of the best places you could get brunch. We had a number of gay members in our parish. The first gay covenant service that I was asked to do was in 1965. It never happened, but that also stirred up the church.

PG: Covenant, you mean like a marriage?

CL: Like a marriage, right. Except we called it a covenant service or a service of holy union. Probably the first one that I actually did do was in 1969, maybe, '67 or '69.

PG: You remember who that was?

CL: That was 2 women and the service was conducted at St. Aidan's Episcopal up on the top of Twin Peaks there, near Twin Peaks. I've done a number of services like that since. In fact one just 2 years ago at Marlena's with Richard and David. David the former Emperor of San Francisco.

PG: Tell me about the Night Ministry. Tell me now about, go back and just start to tell me about CRH. You said that you were not at the original Mill Valley but Bill Black talked to you and said I'd like you to get involved so you began to get involved in the fall. Start to just, tell me that story.

CL: Okay. My name was suggested as a charter member of the CRH Board and so I just started going to the meetings. It was, probably the first meeting was October of that year. We ___?___ basis and the unlisted media basis came the California Hall incident. Its interesting, my story will be different from anybody else's, and I'm sure everybody has a slight variation. Even from the material I gave you, I read that and I say well that's interesting, that somebody saw it from that perspective and I saw it a little different over here. So my story may not be quite the same.

PG: That's why I'm doing this. 'Cause a lot of the stories overlap, but sometimes they directly conflict, but more often people provide things, people remember things and other people forgot or people bring very different perspectives or interpretations of the same event although they remember the same basic facts... That's why its interesting to do this kind of oral history and gather a bunch of people who were all involved in the same thing. Primarily in pursuit of truth, a lot of information on the same subject.

CL: Let me back up just a little bit. In June of that year, when I left Trinity in Des Plains, I had been given a thousand dollars as a departing gift. And so I hadn't done anything with this money and in June of that year I then invited a woman friend of mine, Joanne Chadwick, to come out here for a 3 month experiment in a team ministry. I agreed to pay her \$300.00 a month, I guess. At the end of that time, my boss in Chicago said Chuck, why don't we continue this for a year as an experiment and we'll pay her salary too. So what happened is that Jo was here on the scene and she was working at the North Beach Mission along with me. The night of the dance we had both been to dinner at some friend's home. The dance started at 9 o'clock and we got there about a quarter to 10. On the corner there's a parking lot, there was a parking lot. Its now a senior citizens center. But there was a parking lot right on the corner on the Southwest corner of that intersection but just North of California Hall. We parked in that parking lot and came around the corner and saw all this commotion outside. We also saw a police car parked at one end of the block and another police car parked at the other end of the block and a paddy wagon directly across the street from the entrance to California Hall. And a group of people, knots of people standing on the sidewalk in the area observing everything that was happening. So we didn't know what was going on, we just walked down the sidewalk and as we got close to the building what we saw was a police photographer, no 2 police photographers, still photographers and a movie cameraman who were photographing everybody who entered and left the building. These were all in plain clothes. A uniformed police officer was also standing there. So we walked through this cordon and into the Hall and said, hey, what's going on around here. Herb Donaldson and Evander Smith were standing there and we were talking with them. There was a woman standing behind the table, a straight woman, who was married to a gay man, or had been married to a gay man.

PG: Bill and Nancy May.

CL: That's right. Nancy May was behind the table and Bill May was her former husband. They said about a quarter after 9, a police squad came in to make an inspection of the liquor license. So we let them do this. At a quarter of 10, just a few minutes ago,

another squad came in and they wanted to make a fire inspection. So we were busily talking about this and about quarter after 10, another squad of policemen entered and at that Herb said stop right there, don't move. This is a private dance, you have no right to be here and I am asking you to leave immediately. And the cops just stood there with their arms crossed and eyeballed him and never said a word. And my recollection is that one of them, either Evander or Herb said to Cecil Williams, Cecil go to that phone over there and call the police and have these men removed. It was at that point the 2 attorneys were then arrested, Herb and Evander. Taken outside, frisked, hauled off to the police station and papers that Evander had in his pocket, notes, were taken from him but were never given back to him later on. The other thing that they did is that they called the American Bar Association and said we just thought you'd like to know that 2 of your attorneys have been arrested at a homosexual dance and you might want to bring them up on charges of moral turpitude. And fortunately the person on the other end said, think you very much but I don't think this is any of our God damned business. And hung up the phone. So no charges from the American Bar Association were ever brought like that. Its at that point then that we called another attorney to come, his name escapes me.

PG: Excuse me, could I get you to move to that end of the couch because of the light now is going to cause a problem with your face.

CL: I can either pull the drape or I can move.

PG: Okay if you move, the natural light.... Thank you I appreciate that. Let me just...just a minute Mr. DeMille. Okay, let me reposition myself. Okay, thank you. So there was another lawyer, you were telling me about the other lawyer.

CL: He was called to come and the result was that about a half hour later, somewhere around 11 o'clock another squad of police officers the make another inspection and Nancy May challenged them because the did not have tickers. The tickets were only sold in bars and no tickets were sold at the door and that's what made it a private dance. So you had to have your ticket in your hand when you got there. When she challenged them, she was arrested and when this other attorney challenged them he was also arrested. Then what happened next, well what happened after the first arrests were made, after Herb was arrested, I went home and got a camera. At the time I had a little Pony camera that took 8 picture at a time with 8 flash bulbs. So I came back and took pictures of the police taking pictures. And one of those pictures is in that material that I gave you there.

PG: Do you still have the originals?

CL: No, I gave them to Guy Straight who published one of them in that edition what is it,...

PG: Vector?

CL: Citizens News.

PG: Citizens News, that's right.

CL: Oh no, its not in this material I gave you. I have it in another folder in there. In any case, I would take these flash bulbs and I would take a picture, it flashed, put a new flash bulb in. I stuck the flash bulbs down in my suit pocket and after 8 pictures I had to change rolls of film. So I would take the roll and give it to Jo and that's when women were still wearing brassieres and she'd stuff them down in her bra. She was sitting there in a slight state of panic thinking, Oh Lord, I'm the one that's got all the evidence on me and when we get arrested I'm the one that's going to end up in jail. Well, what happened then is that two more police officers came in around midnight. And at that point we decided to start the show inside. The California Hall event was sponsored, if I remember correctly by the Tavern Guild as a benefit for Society for Individual Rights and Council for Religion and the Homosexual to help these new organizations get started. To give them some money. But it was sponsored by the Tavern Guild, Daughters of Bilitis, ...

PG: Mattachine?

CL: Mattachine Society and...

PG: Maybe SIR and CRH too?

CL: Maybe SIR. About 5 organizations sponsored it. And these two cops came in and they wanted to make another inspection. So I don't know whether it was Guy Straight but it was some member of the gay community that led them into the inner hall and at that point we had started the show because we intended them to close up at one o'clock not two to make sure everybody was out of the hall. The two guys from Los Angeles were standing on folding chairs and as these 2 cops were being led in the folding chairs started to collapse so that they could get up there and look at the show that was going on. They grabbed for each other. And one cop turned to the other and said, did you see those 2 men kiss each other? And the person who led them in said, no I didn't and neither did you. But never the less they were arrested for lewd and lascivious conduct. One man having his hand on the buttocks of the other. At that point then, panic started to spread through the crowd because that happened inside, you see. All these other event had happened out at the entrance way and most of the people never saw the arrests being made. So Clay Caldwell then said, okay, I'll help you guys get out of here. And he would take his coat and spread it wide and run down the stair well out front with about 6 drag queens in behind him and they jump into a limousine. After doing this about twice, the uniformed officer took him aside and said, look there are official photographers who are taking pictures here and if you continue to do this you will be arrested for interfering with an officer in the line of duty. So he had to stop doing that. And in the meantime, I was still taking pictures of the cops. Suddenly, probably around 12:30 the hall was empty. We figured later on that what had happened is the police panicked because this was not only the first time that 500 openly identified gay people were dancing in San Francisco in one spot, but also 10 clergy, wives, girl friends, lovers, whoever, were also on the premises and looked as though the church was giving it imprimatur to this dance. And the cops didn't know how to handle that. The last picture I took was of the

lieutenant in charge getting into his car and driving off. And then suddenly, the marquee lights went out and darkness and silence set in. And Jo Chadwick and another young man from my parish said, come on, let's go home. And I said, Jo, you take Patrick and take the car and take them home. I am going to walk home. I was just so disturbed by this whole thing. I had never experienced this kind of oppression at all before. So I started to walk home and I walked down Turk Street and as I did I took the flash bulbs out of my pocket and smashed them against the buildings as I went, I was just in an absolute rage. And at one point I stopped on the sidewalk and I saw 2 police officers across the street in the lobby of a hotel and I stood there white knuckled. If they had come across the street, I would have attacked them. I know that. They probably had nothing to do with this whole thing whatsoever. But I was in such a rage that I know I would have attacked them. Fortunately that didn't happen and I moved on. But I also began to understand what the Black community was going through at the same time: where the police are the enemy. That's a very frightening place in which to be. I walked all the way home through the Stockton Street Tunnel. I was living over here on Lombard at the time. And I stood outside the fence there in front of the apartment building, the fence was on a vacant lot next door. And just started to cry. And I am standing there just sobbing and at that point, I finally said, wait a minute, what are you allowing these guys to do to you. I stopped crying, went up to my apartment and Jo and Patrick were there. And I fixed a drink....

PG: Who are Jo and Patrick? Jo and Patrick.

CL: Patrick was just a member of the parish who happened be at the dance and had already taken him home. At that point I fixed a drink and the phone rang. It was Ted McIlvenna and he said we are calling a press conference on Monday morning, can you be there. And I said, I'll be there. And so that was really our Stonewall out here. And that happened 2 years before Stonewall in New York. Four, four years? Okay. It made all the difference in the world because the next year the police department called the Tavern Guild and said, what can we do for you? Would you like us block off, take horses and block off the block? Would you like a police car? Would you like escorts of any kind? But they were also under lawsuit because when the suits were, when the three attorneys and Nancy May went to court, we were there in court with them. And the Council for Religion and the Homosexual filed a friend of the court suit along with them. Sorry, that was later we backed out. They went to trial and my recollection is that after the prosecution made it's case. There was a police officer still on the stand and the judge said to him, just a minute, before you step down I want to know what it was that you were trying to accomplish when you went to the dance. He said well we were trying to gain entrance into the dance. He said, did you get in? He said, well we were inside the front door but we weren't really inside the whole dance. But you were in the building, is that right? Yes. Then these people could not have interfered with you in the line of duty, is that right? Well no that's not.... But you did get inside, right? Yes. That's all. At that point then he instructed the jury to being back a verdict of not guilty. And they of course went away and 20 minutes later they came back and said they were ready. What took you so long, he said it took us 20 minutes to get a foreman. So the case essentially then was thrown out of court. The verdict was brought a directed verdict of not guilty

was performed. About 2 months later the other 2 guys from Los Angeles went to trial and in their case the instruction that judge gave the jury is the kind of conduct you wish to see on the streets of San Francisco will determine what your decision is in this case. And they were found guilty and I think they were each fined \$250.00 and forced to registered as sex offenders in the state for the next 2 years while they were on probation. However, immediately thereafter then the three attorneys and Nancy May sued the City and County of San Francisco, the Police Department, the Mayor's office, etc. for a million and a half dollars. And CRH went along as a friend of the court. It was settled out of court 7 years later and CRH got \$50.00, I know that because I was treasurer at the time. The other thing that we realized, however, during the trial is that every police officer who was on duty that night had been given 50 identification cards with him. They had intended to come in make mass arrests and somebody, probably the Mayor at that time, at the last minute call it off. And it didn't happen. Those are the only inferences you can make. But they were prepared to make mass arrests that night.

PG: I heard that. I heard, Evander told me when he was arrested he was getting "card number 1."

CL: Yeah. And every police officer had 50 identification cards on him. That came out in the trial.

PG: The ministers that were involved in, some of the ministers that were involved in the early CRH, I know that Cecil William and Robert Cromeey and I think it was Lewis Durham had all going back had somehow the Selma Civil Rights march.

CL: That's right.

PG: Robert Cromeey has been heavily involved with the NAACP and CORE. I am just wondering how much of the ministers with the essentially were doing this urban outreach, of which you were one and you came into it in your own way. How much do you thing the civil rights movement was an influence on those ministers to start outreaching, for example suddenly going, saying there's a homosexual community that's already starting to organize. That's one question. And then the other part that goes with it when you've sort of finished that, is more broadly, during this period in which these gay groups, for the first time you talk about gay groups and the gay community and the first community center opens in '66. Another kind of revolutionary thing.

CL: Right.

PG: And the Daughters of Bilitis had their own little, had their office down on Mission Street. What were the factors do you think made it possible for these groups to organize and for the American public to permit it to happen without the cops.... As you said the cops made a decision that night not to be really heavy handed. And they could have.

CL: Right.

PG: They could have just pushed the gay community right back in the closet, very hard. They had shut down the Black Cat in '63.

CL: Sure did.

PG: And so I am wondering, starting with civil rights and then more generally, what do you think made it in this period of the early 60 possible here, in San Francisco, for this to happen? I know this is kind of speculative.

CL: One got started in Los Angeles and that happened probably Mattachine Society and One would probably argue as to who was first, but I think One probably was and Mattachine Society followed within about 6 months. Mattachine Society for the most part was a group of 6 or 8 guys here and a mailing list of 200. The life at a gay bar I was told when I came here was 2 years. As soon as a bar became known as that, the vice squad started to infiltrate. The ABC, Alcohol Beverage Control people, were involved. Let's assume that both of us were straight, we just happened to be in this gay bar and we had a few too many drinks and I reached out put my arm around you and said, shit buddy, how about another drink. The bartender would have been right there and say you touch him again and you are permanently 86'd from this bar. There was no – kissing was just beyond the pale. There was no touching, no nothing. What would happen is the vice squad officers would come in and they would sit down next to me and they'd start a little knees-y thing and finally say, what's your name. And I'd say, Peter. Of course you never used your real name and you only gave a first name. The other person would say well, I'm John, you been to be here long and a conversation would develop. What do you like to do, oral or anal or what? The City'd get some concrete statement from you. Then most likely he'd say excuse me I have to go to the men's room, but I'll be right back and then we can go to your place. He'd go to the phone booth and when the front door opened and we left the paddy wagon was waiting. The first thing they would do when they got you downtown is find out who your employer was and call your employer and of course you got fired the next day. In the meantime they might drop the charges after holding you 4 hours, but you still got fired. And those were the kind of harassment techniques that they used. In addition to that, what would happen is after about 9 months or so the owner of the bar would get called in. Maybe it took 2 years, but they say January the 14th, 1997 John Doe was witnessed having his hand on the buttocks of the man sitting next to him. And this is offense number 1. They would enumerate the offenses: two men were seen kissing. Always "John Doe's." Because nobody was arrested. On the basis of that, the ABC then would cause you to lose your license for 90 days and that put you out of business. Now, often what would happen is if you owned the bar you would get your sister, your sister would buy the license from you and you would continue to run the bar, but she now has the license. Or some relative or friend or what have you. And that's more or less how they kind of kept things going. It wasn't until the Society for Individual Rights came along that there was a definite organized group of people that met together on a regular basis. A significant number. As it turned out, I dedicated their building there on 6th Street, I guess it was. I still have a copy of that service around here someplace that I used in those days. And that's because I was involved in CRH and people knew me so they asked me to come down and dedicate the

building which I did. But once the dance happened, and then you had the Tavern Guild and you had the Society for Individual Rights, Coits was really just a fun and games group. It was not politically organized at all in fact. But you had groups like that that then started contacting politicians and saying we would like you to come and speak in front of the Tavern Guild, if you are going to be elected this year. And the politicians then started doing this. And now it looked as though we could control thousands of votes here in the City, when actually that was not true. But the impression was that we could. And that started to make a difference too. It was a combination of the organizations. Its like in the black community. Lynchings took place all the time, pick you off one at a time. Gay bars they picked them off one at a time. The Black Cat, the Oak Room that

PG: Bill Plath?

CL: Bill Plath owned. And they just picked them off one at a time and everything quietly went away. Back in the 2nd world war here in the City, the City was wide open. You had houses of prostitution that Sally Stanford operated. She had 2 or 3 houses here and they were wide open. The same thing was true of the gay community. But that's because all these guys were going to, this was their last chance for fun and games and then they were all going to go and get killed. So let it happen. But after the war then was when the crack down started, especially when you got into the '50s. The organizations that, and the black community of course learned that too, as soon as you had Martin Luther King, Jr., and you got a definite organization that happened and you got people standing up to be counted, risking themselves to be arrested or what have you, it changed the whole political fight. That would be my impression.

PG: Do you think that

CL: And all that was happening at about the same time, the whole civil rights movement.... I was a candidate to go to Selma but I was an alternate. Glide was going to send like 40 people and I was like number 42 or something like that. So just missed going to south to Selma. Ted, he was supposedly in charge of youth work and evangelism for Glide and he just walked out into the Tenderloin and started meeting all the drag queens on the street. And in those days what you had is bad drags, guys that would have balloons for breasts and a mop on their head, strutting down the street saying, God damn it I'm here, what are you going to do with me. Well, of course they got arrested, but they'd be back the next night. But these were individuals, cases like that. They really didn't say it verbally, but essentially that's what they were saying with their person. So they got harassed and that sort of thing. But it was the picking them off one at a time and just keeping everybody under control. It's the same way the City operates with prostitution. If you wanted to stop prostitution in the City, its easy. You arrest the customers. And once you arrest the customers, put their names in the papers, nobody is going to come to San Francisco. And since its simply an economic picture. The prostitutes will disappear. But what happens you see is you got to keep, well, if you work at the St Francis Hotel or any other hotel downtown and you're the bell hop and the guy says where's the action and you're paying \$250, \$300 dollars a night for you room, you'd

better be able to tell him. And the same thing is true of a taxi driver. You want to know where the action is, you'd better familiar or no tip. And so its kept under control. Now when Gaines was here and he said we're not going to make any more arrests, within 3 days 40 prostitutes on one side of the street alone around the St. Francis Hotel were working. I know because I walked those streets in that time. Of course then, what happened is you're walking in with your wife and a prostitute comes up and says, hey man I'm a lot cuter than she is and I give better head than she does, how about you come out with me tonight. Well, now we've got an explosive situation and the hotels said crack down and they cracked down and everything went back to normal again.

PG: Out of sight, but not out of mind?

CL: Right.

PG: Do you remember Elliot Blackstone?

CL: Yes.

PG: Can you just tell me, because he's said about cops sort of changing. People....

CL: That's one of the things that happened, you see. After the dance, probably a year to 2 years later and with the advent of CRH, the police department appointed Elliot Blackstone as their liaison to the gay community.

PG: So what do you remember about him and other officers that began to pioneer this work. I know he also worked a lot in the Tenderloin, especially with transvestites and transsexuals.

CL: Elliot was straight. But he was more open to the gay community. I think he also taught me some things about how a police department should operate. For example, if you are going to make an arrest, you don't surround a guy and beat him into unconsciousness in a public place. What you do is you quietly move him out of the public view and you don't beat on him and you make your arrest in a doorway and quietly take him away. And then you don't have riots taking place around here. So the cops were learning, cop crowd control and all sorts of things in those days because people had never been alert on this. Now with the black community organized, with the peace marches that were taking place, with the gay demonstrations that were taking place, with the feminist movement taking place; all this was happening at the same time. I walked up and down Market Street so many times, I marched from here to Kezar Stadium one time in a civil rights demonstration. And this was all happening. The police gradually came around to understand that we have to work in different ways than we have. And that's where Elliot Blackstone was instrumental. In educating the police department at the same time acting as their liaison with the gay community. It worked two ways.

PG: Do you remember anything about Citizens Alert?

CL: Yes. I was a member of that board for 10 years too until they went out of existence. And essentially, while I actually was a member of CRH for 10 years, president for a couple of years and treasurer for most of the rest of the time. Citizens Alert did not last that long. Citizens Alert probably lasted not more than about 4 years.

PG: That was also a baby of California Hall, right?

CL: Yes. Probably, if I remember it probably formed about the fall of '65 or '66, somewhere in there. And this was an attempt to monitor the police department. To have, well very similar to CUAV today, where people would come to us and report the harassment of the police department for brutality and then we would take this to the police department. Now what we found out is that after 2 years, I think it was 2 years, we had reported, I don't know, 50 or 100 cases. Of those 80 percent were immediately dismissed. The other 18 cases were investigated and no guilt was found. Of the 2 that were left only one was ever prosecuted to any degree and he was probably reprimanded and that was the end of it. What we found out is that although Citizens Alert was a great idea, we didn't have any power. So nothing was happening, we weren't really able to influence the police department for change to any great extent.

PG: Also just kind of standard?

CL: Yeah, we started drifting apart.

PG: I'll ask you this question and then I'll finally have to go to work.

CL: Really?

PG: Yeah I have to make some money. You were involved in CRH for a long time. We've just talked really about the very beginning of what you were doing. So when I interview you again we can talk more.

CL: The most important thing that we did in the early days were the 3 symposia that we had.

PG: I was just going to ask you what you felt were the most important effects of the organization had.

CL: Those symposia predated anything else that was done in the universities or colleges around here. The first one, and once again, there was a real movement as women got involved. The first one, we made sure there were small groups. It was 2 days, is that right, Friday night we'd start, all day Saturday and then Sunday at noon is when it would end. They were always held at Glide Church. Essentially it was somebody like Herb Donaldson would come in and he would talk about the legal aspects of homosexuality in the 50 states or 48 states, whatever it was then. Ranging from such things as a first offense was life imprisonment in Georgia, a first offense in Illinois you could lose your drivers' license. Don't ask me what the connection was, but even then that's the way the

laws read. So it was all over the boards throughout the United States. While Herb would do that, somebody else would come in and talk about the psychiatric aspects of homosexuality. Somebody else would come in and talk about their personal story about how they had been treated by their parents. Like Rick, for example, who ended up going to

PG: Electric shock.

CL: Electric shock for 20 treatments, that sort of thing. And then on Saturday night we would all meet in small groups in various gay bars and have dinner together. And let people just see what the gay community was in its ordinary setting, surroundings. And then finish up on Sunday morning. At the time the second meeting came around, we were starting Thursday night and going Thursday through Sunday. And by the third year happened, the women at this point were saying look we want equal representation. Up until that point, like the first year, there were groups that had just 2 gay men in it. By the second year they said we want 1 gay man and 1 lesbian in each small group. And by the 3rd year what happened is that women said Thursday night and all day Friday is to be women alone, no men. And we'll have women in the small groups and everything will be women's concerns and then the men took over and they did all day Saturday and Sunday morning with the final thing. And the thing about the last one was we met in the downstairs room, film room and watched essentially fuck films.

PG: Where was this held?

CL: At Glide.

PG: Okay.

CL: What would happen is you'd have a series of slides here in the center and it would show 2 men who were sleeping in bed and they would get up and 1 would be seen going to the bathroom and brushing his teeth and the other was going to the kitchen and fixing coffee and it showed their whole day's activities, just ordinary human beings. There was no sex or anything else involved and walking off into the sunset later on. A very romantic sort of coupling is what you saw. But after this got started in the center, then all of a sudden over here on the side you did see a heterosexual fuck film that was actually taking place and about a minute into that over on this side over here was 2 gay men that were coupling and then all of a sudden you had another picture here and this one is cartoons of frogs that are screwing and ants and all kinds of things and then finally you had another one here and this was strictly masturbatory film. All of this being bombarded by all of this, it was kind of interesting for me the first time to watch all these things because I had never seen any pictures like this before. And the second year, it was much more fun watching the audience and watching them go Oooo [a sound]. Or some of those other guys sitting there going, yeah.

PG: Who was the audience who came to these symposia? Clergy mostly?

CL: We invited clergy, police, judges, psychiatrists, doctors....

PG: All policy makers basically?

CL: We wanted to get movers and shakers that would come that had some influence in some segment of society. And those were the people that we tried to reach. No bishop from my Lutheran Church came and so several years after that when we, Lutheran Social Services, sponsored a similar 2 or 3 day gathering, without the fuck films, but with a similar format. One bishop who later became the presiding bishop of the LCA did attend that with his wife. And she went back to Minneapolis where he was a Synodical Bishop at the time and she went to the hospital because she was the head nurse there and got the hospital to change its policy, allowing partners of gay men and lesbians to visit them in the hospital, especially when they were dying.

PG: So you feel this is maybe just one example but repeated many, many times that ____? ____ were really effected by this one on one communication and that they went back and changed policy because they could? Back on the local level.

CL: I think the other thing it did too, Paul, is that it stormed somebody like state university here or state college as it was then, to start courses and to do similar kinds of things. So that after 3 years or so it was all happening in the colleges and universities around here. I think CRH began to raise the question, well is it still necessary for us to continue to try to do this.

PG: 'Cause the education baton had been passed?

CL: Yeah, right. At least to some extent at that point.

PG: Is that the beginning also of the faction, you talk universities and their courses, but is that also roughly that professionals within their own.... Let me put it this way, people in their own professions began to organize gay and lesbian groups. So you could start to have lawyers get together and start to say, well we've got to get the lawyers, the American Bar Association to kind of take cognizance of this and maybe rethink, you know what I am getting at?

CL: Yeah.

PG: Is this when this began? This sort of thing.

CL: Right.

PG: Do you think this also came out of the CRH symposia to a certain degree?

CL: I think it certainly did as far as the American Psychiatric Association was concerned because one of the fellows here, Ronald, I can't remember his name. Ron comes to my mind, went there and worked that whole group of people, organized and made a

presentation and eventually after about 2 years was able to convince the American Psychiatric Association to drop this homosexuality as one of its, what do they call it, disease, syndromes or, I forget what they call it exactly. Its no longer listed. The American Sociological Association did the same thing. There was a woman here who ended up going back to the Philadelphia Library and starting a gay and lesbian section in the Philadelphia Library. She herself was lesbian but she came out of San Francisco and probably one of the symposiums and ended up being head librarian over there and organizing and that sort of thing. So it just started happening. And of course Stonewall took place four years after our California Hall thing here.

PG: It kind of exploded nationally? But by then, by Stonewall then a lot of groundwork, important groundwork had been....

CL: Oh absolutely, sure.

PG: Because what had happened here in San Francisco to a certain degree was also happening nationally. We're going to have to get off here. Thank you very much.

CL: Another thing that made a difference probably right around the late '60s, early '70s is the Kinsey Report and there was a man who came here to San Francisco who wanted to interview all kinds of openly identified gay people to get their stories and he spent like a week here. Now I was offered at that time to be a part of that and turned it down because at that point I was just newly identified as being gay and so it wasn't generally public knowledge and so I turned down the interview. But any number of other people in the gay community did interviews for him and there was a special report on gay people that happened. And also Evelyn Hooker's work in Southern California. Those two professional things were happening all at the same time, and those things made a difference too.

PG: This revelation on Hooker was really early. But I think it was sort of the first large samples of non-deviant homosexuals.

CL: That's right.

PG: ___?___ it gets into this self-justifying movement which I think of gay people as perverts and criminals and so I go into mental institutions and into prisons and then somehow, gee, my biases seems to be just seem to be justified.

CL: That's right, yeah, that's right. And she did not do that. And that probably influenced the Kinsey Report later on to do the same thing and just came here and interview people in the gay community.

PG: Ted McIlvenna talked about that. This is kind of his thing in terms of his, its almost a personal theology that he has or his sense of theology, but he believes very strongly or that worked very strongly for what he would call liberation of human sexuality. Then there was the Wolfenden Report or the Kinsey Report and these organizations were

happening in San Francisco and I think he just felt, he used the word there was sort of a revelation that happened. It was his job to enable people to understand that and also enable that revelation to get a foothold.

[End of video I]

[Video II, April 2, 1997]

PG: Okay. Let me briefly go over what we did cover.

CL: Okay.

PG: You gave me your birth date and the year you came to San Francisco. And you talked about, more of sort of an outline, how you got into the ministry and being involved with youth work through the ministry. You were at this point were in Chicago. And you became the Associate Secretary of the National Youth Office, but because of way the rules were about getting called to being confirmed as an active minister you had to first become and assistant pastor, you couldn't go directly into national.

CL: No, well, I couldn't be ordained.

PG: That's it.

CL: What happened I did go directly from seminary to a national office but I could not be ordained. In order to be ordained I had to leave that office and go into the parish ministry. Which is what happened.

PG: And then you had conflicts with the senior pastor and lost.... I thing insubordination and heresy but stopped short of death.

CL: That was a dream.

PG: That was a dream.

CL: A nightmare.

PG: You also talked about what happened with the Luther League of America. How you had been involved with the more progressive branch of what was the United Lutheran Church of America. And how what later became the Lutheran Church of America. I think you talked about....

CL: And eventually now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the ELCA.

PG: Okay and that when there was this, what do you call it, this institutional shakeup, part of what happened was that the youth groups you had been involved in, they became all adult run.

CL: That's right.

PG: And they let all of the previous staff go and you were part of that.

CL: Right.

PG: And that was one of the reasons that happened and you had yourself released from this assistant pastor-ship at this point because of what was going on with the senior pastor. You resigned, he resigned. Although you said that was unusual. So you were three months without a call. But you should not have resigned without a call. And then you went to this meeting in Chicago where you met.... There was also at the same time another meeting where there were 4 people on ____?____ clergy who were the only clergy at that time in the Lutheran Church in America.

CL: Right.

PG: And you met a man there who was in charge of missions, the board of missions and he offered you a place either in Hunter's Point or North Beach.

CL: Right.

PG: And you chose North Beach because it was bohemian, because there were beats and there was a chance to open up church ministry to homosexuals, which was basically terra incognita.

CL: Right.

PG: And so when you got here in '64, you talked a little bit about the North Beach area, how the beats had faded out essentially by that time. But that there were still, there was still an active gay scene there especially on Grant Avenue on the perimeter. You talked about a United Church of Christ minister who was actually who was actually did a coffee house ministry, but it had ceased to exist by the time you got here. Then you talked the little ministry that you worked at, the North Beach Lutheran Ministry that you took over from this Italian doctor minister and you gave a history of him. And you gave a vocational ministry that sounded very interesting, I'll leave out the details.

CL: No. I did that once.

PG: Yes, yeah. You did talk about the fact that there were about 40 people in the mission and that you were not a pastor of a regular church but that national church paid your salary, so that this was kind of a special kind of congregation out here. It was more evangelical rather than outreach. And that in that way you said you agreed with what Bob Cromey had said, that many of the, that the core group of ministers who initially were active in the CRH all had these special kinds of jobs in which their salaries were

paid out of a foundation or the national and were not contingent on the vagaries of a particular church.

CL: Congregation, right.

PG: A congregation that could say, hey stop spending your time with them, come work with us because we're paying you, we're paying your salary, you're supposed to be ministering to us. And actually you said you never had a problem with that because you were sent by the national to work with homosexuals as part of your mission.

CL: Right.

PG: And the international boss in Chicago and you had a regional boss out here. You came in '64, June of '64, you came in January and June was the Mill Valley conference and fall CRH forms as an organization. Your local boss, Bill Black, was at the conference and recommended you both for CRH and the Night Ministry.

CL: Right.

PG: That these were people who were called "urban specialists" which came out of the civil rights movement and the "white flight." And people, which all protestant churches I think were trying to figure out how to evangelize in the city, and create missions in the city. Clay Caldwell was doing this for UCC, Bill Black for the Lutheran Church in America, Ted McIlvenna was point man for the Methodist Church and Bill Grace was doing that for the Presbyterian Church. And he was the one that conceived the idea for the Night Ministry.

CL: Right.

PG: In late 1963, I think. And all these men would coordinate together. These urban specialists would get together and talk about like how to service the communities. The first, you had the story of how the first night ministry began and also the story of Tom Johnson.

CL: Okay.

PG: And then you began to talk about how the Night Ministry functioned, the beginning. How you ___?___ already in '65, that really amazed me. Ten p.m. to 6 a.m. when you would call back. Herb Donaldson used to work the phones. You talked about Don Stewart.

CL: Right.

PG: Who actually applied for the job. He was interested in starting the Night Ministry. And then your involvement. He was the Night Minister for 12 years and for the first 2 years you were 1 night a week and then you went to 2 nights a week and then 3 nights a

week half time, also working at the YMCA. Because by this time the North Beach Mission had been disbanded and so you were....

CL: Right. I was working at the YMCA. I was in between working 2 nights a week and 3 nights a week at half time.

PG: Okay.

CL: That's how we maintained, well the support for the North Beach Mission or Fellowship as it was called then, was pulled out in, let's see, 1971. And that's when they were able to pay me \$250.00 a month, so I went to work for the Y for 2 nights a week. And then when Don Stewart got tired I was able to work....

PG: Full time.

CL: Half time, full half time really.

PG: And then you got full time for 19 years until 1996?

CL: Right.

PG: So I am assuming that, doing the calculations that you started full time about 1977.

CL: Ahh, 1976.

PG: I wanted to ask you, how long were you doing 2 nights a week?

CL: From 1966 to let's see, 1970 or 71, somewhere in there.

PG: That would make sense. Going by other things you talked about. Because that's about when the Night Ministry petered out here.

CL: No the Night Ministry didn't. That's when the national support for the North Beach Mission was cancelled.

PG: Yes, yes, yes, my mistake. That's what I meant.

CL: Right.

PG: So then from about 1970-71, you were full time half time.

CL: Right. I was paid a full half time salary to work 3 nights a week.

PG: Right, right. Yes. And then you said that Don Stewart arrived in the City in August '64. In September he went incognito to the City. In October you said he rode around with the police the ambulances and suicide prevention, so on and so forth. In November,

the first Sunday night in November was the first time he went out officially as the Night Minister and you were with him.

CL: Right.

PG: And that you were approached by the gay community in the Tenderloin and you were taken bar hopping.

CL: That would happen within a month after we started to work.

PG: Right, right. Then you talked about Church Street, the Miracle Mile, which was just getting started. Haight Ashbury, Bradley's Corner, Maud's. You said takes place, well that was maybe later. But you remember going to the Gilded, you told the story about going to the Gilded Cage. And how you were treated and after midnight the street kids showed up these street kids showed up....

CL: That was Pearl's

PG: Pearls.

CL: Which was in the rear. Okay.

PG: It was a rich interview. I have taken more notes your tape than I have for anybody else's. You have a great crystal clear memory. A lot of other people on their tapes say "well, I don't know" or can't quite remember. You talked about the old meat market or getting the hustlers to talk about the old meat market and how it was disrupted by BART being put in. And therefore how the trade moved up Turk to Polk Street, lower Polk.

CL: Right.

PG: And that happened about the same time that Castro was starting up. By then the late '70, early '60s, late '60s, early '70s.

CL: BART was, Market Street was torn up from '67

PG: To '71.

CL: To '71. And so that's when Polk Street started to open up. And then Castro opened up just after that.

PG: Then you talked about the residual group of kids up here. You talked about the Last Exit. I don't want to go into all the details but you told the story of the Last Exit. You told about kids sleeping in apartments here, living in bushes on Telegraph. And you talked about, how do I say this, that around 1969 the hard drugs moved in. The Mafia and what you believe is a connection with Joe Alioto. And you talked about stories of kids up here in North Beach where they were disturbing, cases that were never solved.

One kid that was pushed off the cliff, another had a arm severed. You felt that this pretty much disrupted the mission up here. That it got just too heavy for the kids up here and a lot of them moved to the Haight Ashbury and that also destroyed the Haight Ashbury because hard drugs moved in.

CL: Okay, no what happened is when the Last Exit was closed and Mike's Pool Hall was raided down here, then the kids moved out to the Haight Ashbury and that's when the Haight Ashbury opened up. And when the Haight Ashbury was going from '67 to '69 very strong, the Summer of Love and all that sort of thing, when the hard drugs came in out there, that's when one of the people who used to live here, who had gone to the Haight Ashbury, was murdered and his arm was severed. But that happened in '60..., '70 somewhere in there. Seventy, seventy-one. And it didn't effect what was happening here because that had already changed. All the kids here had already moved to the Haight Ashbury. What it affected was the Haight Ashbury. When hard drugs and kind of Mafia attempt was made in the Haight Ashbury, and a police crackdown came, the Haight Ashbury kids split.

PG: Okay.

CL: And that's when the Haight Ashbury started to collapse and the hard drugs came in and the bars went up and the Castro movie that was just made indicated how the people moved out of the Haight Ashbury over into the....

PG: Castro.

CL: Castro area and that's when Castro started up.

PG: Okay.

CL: Castro started not because people moved from Polk Street out to Castro, but because they moved from....

PG: Haight.

CL: Haight over the hill into the Castro area and at that point the "white flight" was taking place in the City. And so that's how the Castro developed.

PG: Yeah that was the, I know that the Haight had maintained that gay connection because when my sister was, my sister who is 9 years older than I am. And she lived in the Haight, must have been around 1978, 77, something like that.

CL: Okay.

PG: And I went up there and unbeknownst to me, she and my mother had a big discussion about whether I should go visit my sister Ann because the segments of society I would be exposed in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood that my mom was worried

about. Because we lived in a small town. And my sister convinced her, she said, you know my parents have always been pretty good this way. She said he'll have me for guidance and he's going to see it anyway at some point and so why won't you come stay with me. So I did. What I remember is seeing a lot of strange men, and not quite knowing what to do with them and realizing only later that they were gay. It was still a strong gay neighborhood at that time. But that's something that's been erased from the official history about the Haight Ashbury. That it always was had a strong gay contingent to it.

CL: Like there was a period of time when the hard drugs came in there where the gay bars collapsed, like the Golden Cask was out there. And they sold out. There were about 3 or 4 gay bars in the '60s.

PG: Romeo's?

CL: Yeah. And Golden Cask I remember.

PG: Another one I can't think of.

CL: Yeah. And they all folded and now it's come back again. But they folded like in the '70s after things really got rough and you got almost Nazi types were coming in. Skin head types. And that's when the flight then went over to the Castro area.

PG: I'll have to talk to Shauna. I going to interview Shauna Coleman this Saturday.

CL: Oh, okay.

PG: She owned the Golden Cask so....

CL: It's not the Golden Cask, she owned.... She did own the Golden Cask.

PG: She did.

CL: That's right.

PG: She first had the Frat out here. Near where the old, around the corner from where the old Black Cat was. Then she had the Golden Cask. And later she was involved in the Mint and Sharps. And now she and her partner also own the Twin Peaks.

CL: Right. Somebody else that you could talk to is Bob Pace. I know you interviewed Mark at his place, right?

PG: Mark?

CL: What's Mark's last name. A straight kid from the East who is out here doing research on the gay community.

PG: Oh, Mark Fitch.

CL: Yeah.

PG: He's a nice guy. I didn't really interview him so much as just, he just contacted me because he is just contacting people. So I have just sort of been like a friend.

CL: But you met Bob Pace at the same time, right?

PG: Sure I have been introduced to Bob Pace.

CL: Okay. He's been here a long time and he knows a lot about the bar scene and that sort of thing. Who was where like when ____?____. But Shauna would too, when you talk to Shauna.

PG: For years he was out at March, right?

CL: Could be, because there was a period you see when there were no women bartenders allowed in the City. In fact in the state. It was a state law that women could not tend bar. And so even though it was a woman's bar they had to have men bartenders. In fact have you seen the video *Last Call at Maud's*? Okay, what it shows in there is that they had men bartenders. And finally when the law was changed they could have women bartenders.

PG: I'll have to talk with her about that.

CL: Yeah. And that happened since I have been out here too.

PG: Okay. Later you talked about losing the support from the national for the North Beach Mission and then you formed a covenant community.

CL: Right.

PG: Which continued for about 7 years and dissolved in '78.

CL: Right to 1978.

PG: You talked about doing covenant services, but the first one you actually performed was at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church. The first one that you were contacted, you were asked about perhaps doing.... Do you want to take that?

[Telephone interruption]

PG: Then you went to CRH but you went almost immediately into California Hall and you encompassed that by talking about Jo Chadwick.

CL: Yes.

PG: You said you had \$100.00, a \$1000.00, when you left Des Plaines and that you used that \$300.00, I think it was \$300.00 a month you paid her to come out and you did a team ministry and then it worked and then you got money to continue that for a year. You gave a very nice, I thought, for this oral history, a very nice detailed and also very clear clearly chronological account of what happened that night which is very, very helpful.

CL: Oh.

PG: Again, very detailed and I just want to say thank you. Its helpful for me to start, when I was collating information from other interviews. Because there is a lot of misfits being kicked up about that event. And I am trying now one the next things

[some information lost between cassettes]

PG: ...That was a piece of information that was meaningful.

CL: Oh, okay.

PG: There's been slaughtering of a lot of people.

CL: I think they had just so much money and so they said we could send 40 people and then they had alternates and I was one of the alternates.

PG: Yeah, that's what you said. You came up like 42 out of 40

CL: Right

PG: Another interesting, you said during this period with all these, not just the gays, the beginning of the sense of being a gay community and gay civil right, but black civil rights, the women's movement, the environmental movement, the anti-war movement, there was a lot of civil disobedience going on. The policemen suddenly had to learn public relations, crowd control, non-aggressive arrest. They were responding to this idea of you were keying the gay community into a general social situation in which suddenly the police were confronted by a lot of groups doing this. And I can understand if it had only been the gays, if once again it had only been the gays and nobody else, it probably wouldn't have work. But again it's a matter of perceptions perhaps.

CL: I think we learned from each other what would work and what wouldn't work.

PG: You sat on, ___?___ Bob Cromey said this that a lot of you people were sort of jumping, you were on this organization's board but you were also that civil rights organization's board.

CL: Right. Well, for example I was also on the board at the Lutheran, what was it called, Ecumenical House, which was a Lutheran representative on, no I was a member of the Lutheran Representation at Ec House out at State University. And so while I was there at a meeting one day is when we, I think it was probably when there was a demonstration taking place on campus. It may have been the time when Hirizowa, whatever his name was, pulled the plug on the speakers and so on. And then we watched out of the window and we saw kids running from campus up Holloway Street and being chased by officers on horseback with batons so long and as they chased them they would strike at their heads from the backs of the horses as they ran up Holloway Street and knocked them unconscious on the street and then a paddy wagon pulled up and 4, 2 officers were on the back and 2 were in the driver's compartment. The 4 would get out, open up the back of the van and pick the kid up, 2 on the legs and 2 on the arms and pitch them into the van as hard as they could. So they would hit the bottom of the van and slide forward and crack their head again on the front steel panel. And these were kids that were running to get away from the police. When we saw this, it was just absolutely appalling.

PG: What year was this? Is this about the time of the free speech movement?

CL: Yes, this was all part of the free speech thing.

PG: So it was about '65, '66 somewhere.

CL: Yeah.

PG: Do you know what incidents, the beginning....

CL: I think there was this demonstration on campus and it may have been the time when, Hozawa was he the president?

PG: I....

CL: The Japanese president they had. And he went up on stage and pulled the plug from the microphones. And that kind of started things and....

PG: It was a student committee, like a student union group that was standing up....

CL: I can't remember exactly. But you probably want to look into that. In any case the kids then, the police went after kids and the kids started running off campus. As they crossed 19th Avenue they were running up Holloway Street because the building was right on the corner of Holloway and 19th and is still there. We could look out the window and see the kids running up the street and see this police action taking place out there.

PG: So this really appalled you?

CL: Oh, this, I mean who was the enemy. The kids were on campus in I think it was a free speech demonstration. They were attacked by the police.

PG: So this motivated you to do what then?

CL: Well I think this just went along with, you know you put California Hall with that and here is something else now.

PG: Like Selma, Alabama in the...?

CL: Right. And dropping the tear gas from helicopters on the kids over in Berkeley. This may have been a peace demonstration, anti-Vietnam demonstration. It seems to me it was in the early '70s when this was happening. Somewhere around in there. But all those things just.... As you said, we were involved in so many different kinds of actions at that time and they were all happening. So I marched up Market Street in a peace demonstration, I was marching for civil rights, with the feminist movement and all sorts of things like that.

PG: Okay. I mean it is important to get this context I think. It also helps to see how the individuals themselves were running around working on different committees. Because it shows itself how this how this what you said about ____? ____ organization. It's a very interesting time. You said the CRH last for about 10 years and you were treasurer for most of the time, I think for 2 years you were doing something and then you were treasurer.

CL: I was treasurer probably for 4 years and president for 2 years and treasurer again for the last 4 years that I was involved. It continued beyond that but I was involved for 10 years. And right around the time when I left is when Bill became executive director for a couple of years.

PG: Who did?

CL: The first United Church of Christ minister who was openly gay and was ordained after he declared being openly gay.

PG: Oh, he was the first one in the nation, right, openly gay minister ordained.

CL: I can't think of his last name thought, Bill....

PG: Yeah, his name's been given to me before.

CL: Yeah, you'll know who that is. He became the first executive director, a staff position for CRH. And that lasted about 2 years and then after that CRH became more of a mail box drop at that point. And in part the reason for that was that by that point you see the colleges were having courses on homosexuality. It was happening a lot of other

different ways. The work that CRH had originally started to do by holding those early symposia.

PG: Yes, and that was a success, you had talked about the fact that.... Just what you said, that by 1973-74 the APA and the ASA, the American Sociology Association had changed their definitions. By '76 or '77 the law, the sodomy laws were repealed in California. Just to reiterate what you were saying, in those 10-12 years so much was achieved, also, I think, by the time Anita Bryant came around in '78, a lot of professionals had already begun to come out of the closet and organize in their professions. Which I know in talking to Don Lucas and some other people who were involved in the Mattachine Society very, very early, that that was a big stumbling block for gay organizations early on was that a lot of professional people, especially teachers, refused to be associated because it was so high risk. A lot of these people weren't even seen in bars.

CL: That's right.

PG: And that really is a whole, that ability of professionals to begin to enter the movement around the mid-'60s is a really, to me, a real shift. It's a real important shift I think. And it's something again that I don't think has been really documented well enough. And then later we talked about the Kinsey report, Marylyn Hooker. Just the fact that We came back to the question again about the ministers. I think maybe, sort of this way, you're free to answer it any way you like to. Do you think this one of the reasons why starting in '64 you suddenly had ministers saying it's okay to be gay. That suddenly it starts to create an environment where professional people begin to feel like it's less dangerous. I'm saying years now. I'm sure it takes years but, you know what I'm getting at.

CL: That's one half. I think the other half is that at that point a number of people were no longer willing to live a lie. And that as these movements were taking place, the movement was saying here I am, you have to deal with me. I am a black person. I have been denied my rights, you have to deal with that. Women were saying the same thing. Gays were saying the same thing. And so the other side of that coin you see is that clergy were also saying the same thing. I am no longer willing to live a lie. And that's what happened at a later point when 3 Lutheran seminarians from our Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary went to the first national march on Washington. When they came back they had been transformed.

PG: What year was that?

CL: Oh, golly.

PG: Sorry. I know I have to ask these nitpicky questions.

CL: Yes, and I wish I could remember.

PG: Do you have any...?

CL: Jeff Johnson is one of the people. Jeff Johnson is the pastor at First United Lutheran Church. One of the churches that has since.... And that's another story you need to get involved.

PG: Which is, I'm sorry.

CL: Well, when these 3 seminarians, Jeff Johnson, Jim Lancaster and Joel Workens. Now Joel just died of AIDS in the last couple of years. But Jim Lancaster and Jeff Johnson are still very much involved. Jim is down in Los Angeles however, but Jeff is here in the City. They went to the first National March on Washington and when they came back as I said, they were transformed. They said, I can't live a lie any more. And they came out at seminary and then asked to be ordained. And then there is a long story that goes with that which Jim would be able to tell you in detail as to how they went, were certified for ordination but the bishop refused to ordain them. This bishop did. The other 2 were connected with a bishop in Southern California and so they were under his jurisdiction and when they went down there he refused to ordain them. Jeff was up here with this bishop and when he went before the bishop the bishop said, are you celibate. And he said, yes, I am I am not a practicing homosexual. He said will you promise to remain that way and he said, I can't do that. Because I don't know what will happen. And the fear that, even though he was celibate, supposedly he could, should have been ordained. But the bishop made a statement that went something like, you are in compliance with the letter of the law but not the spirit of the law and the fear the bishop had was that once he got out into a congregation and the congregation began to love him as a human being, as their pastor, as someone who cares about us, is compassionate with out concerns, who is an excellent preacher, whatever. That when he came out and said by the way I have a lover, the church would not know how to handle this. Because now you've got a whole congregation that is suddenly going to say we still want him as our pastor. And so the bishop would not ordain him. And the result was that 40 of us then got together and did ordain Jeff and 2 lesbians who were at St. Francis Lutheran Church. And that whole ceremony took place over here at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. And eventually resulted in both those congregations being put on trial and being dropped from the Lutheran Church.

PG: Are they still dropped.

CL: Yes. They were put on 5 years suspension until such a time as they would recant and fire Jeff as the minister out at First United and fire the 2 lesbians who were connected with St. Francis and of course they did not do that. And so at the end of that time they were automatically dropped.

PG: This, raises another question I wanted to ask you, since it sort of comes in here I'll just ask you now. You had mentioned in the interview that at about 1970, and I am being vague here. But I'm saying about. You came out, in a way. See I don't know quite what to say. But you said at that time that you, well you tell me what it was. But somewhere

around that time you made a decision and what I'm wondering is, again, I don't know quite how to ask this question because I don't want to ask it unfairly. One way to ask is how come it took you so long. I think that's unfair. Just led you at that point after being actively involved, coming here and being in the Night Ministry and think you saw the real nitty-gritty of the thing here. What led to your decision at that point, what actually was that decision. And what was there at stake for you? Is that clear at all? I ask the question because I think it was a sticky time.

CL: Well my circumstances were different than Jeff's for example. Jeff knew he was gay. He, after the march on Washington, he came back and he had to be honest about himself. In my case, I was still a virgin at 36. I had, the only experiences I had had prior to that was as a teenager, mutual masturbation and once in seminary. But there were no labels and so I never identified myself as being homosexual or being gay or anything like that. It wasn't until 1968 when another Lutheran pastor from another country was here and he came to stay with me that the very first night that we were together it just happened. And it was a natural as rain. And even then, I don't know that I still put a label on it. But probably within that year, the person who gave me at least a certain self identification was Sally Gerhard and this was at a CRH symposium and usually on Friday or Saturday night we would all go out to gay bars and have dinner so that the people in the symposium could see gay people in their environment. And we would have dinner and have drinks afterwards and that was all part of the experience. I happened to be sitting next to Sally and she turned to me and said, by the way chuck, are you gay? And I said, yes I am.

PG: Huh.

CL: But I've never even since then got around and say, Hi, I'm Chuck Lewis and I'm gay.... Or anything like that.

PG: Out of the young adult minister.

CL: Yeah, right. So I continued in the ministry. I continued my involvement in CRH, I continued marching in the Gay Pride Parade and if anyone asked any questions, it was simple, I do this because it's part of my ministry.

PG: Did you ever try, because it was, it was.

CL: But I never said, I'm gay and that's why I'm marching. Although both were true, you see.

PG: Yes. But they aren't absolutely lock-step kind of thing?

CL: No.

PG: That's something else that I wanted to ask you too, I asked the other ministers, and I don't, I really don't mean to be prying here, but its, if you're interviewing a minister I

think it's a very important question. It turned out to be a very important question for Elliott Blackstone and the question is, what is your theology or your sense of spirituality such that you felt that coming here and doing this mission work, is mission work. That its part of your ministry. Because I know Elliott Blackstone talked very, talked about faith, he's a very devout man. A very proud Presbyterian. He talked about how his faith energized his police work.

CL: You could see that.

PG: Yes, these things are very important for people, for those people who have, their spiritual life is an important part of their life, you have to ask this question. And so I just wanted to ask you, you're free to answer any way you want. I mean if you want you can talk about how do what you do that does not fit into traditional Lutheran theology where you can take the question anyway you want to, let me put it that way.

CL: Well let me give you another illustration of this development if you want a self identity. I was asked to preach at the 1978, I guess it was, 1976 assembly of Lutheran's Concerned, which would be like Dignity and so on. I gave a copy of what I had to say to all my family. But there was nothing in it that said "I'm gay." It talked about other experiences of other people and so on. And then, I think it was 1978, I was asked to be part of a panel at the Dignity convention in San Diego and there were 4 of us, 2 were Catholic priests, both of whom are now dead of AIDS, unfortunately. The first Episcopal woman that was ordained as a deacon here in San Francisco and myself. We were supposed to be talking about the role of the church and the homosexual. John McNeil was the keynote speaker for that convention in San Diego. He, his opening speech so empowered everyone that the priests and the nuns who were there were embracing one another. It was just, all of a sudden it was a love feast. And it didn't matter whether you were straight or gay or bi or who you were. We just were one people. It came time then for this panel discussion to meet. And we were supposed to, each one of us, talk about our own personal experience. And I was probably about the 3rd person who spoke and I spoke about how I was asked to come here to San Diego, the same things I told you Paul, and had a certain mandate to see what we could do with the homosexual community and so on. And immediately after this, someone raised a question about, well Chuck in your case did you're bishop know that you're gay. And I think my answer at the time was something like, any bishop who is worth his salt whatsoever knows who is or who isn't, so its never been a problem. But the thing that bothered me was, why did they pick me out of all 4 people who had openly talked about being gay and their own experience, I hadn't, I thought. I went back and listened to the tape and for the 1st time instead of talking about me and them, I was talking about us. And I realized that that's what John McNeil had done. Totally unconsciously I was talking about us. So the people, he taught me about us. And I had self revealed myself without ever intentionally intending to do so. And I realized then that lots of people knew I was gay. So immediately thereafter there was there was a meeting of the local chapter of Lutheran's Concerned and people congratulated me and said its was real good panel discussion we had because some of them had come down to attend it. And I came to San Francisco again.... No, I'm sorry let me just go back one minute. The 3 seminarians went to the second national march on

Washington, not the first. At the first national march on Washington, Bill Johnson is the guy where I was thinking...

PG: Oh, Bill Johnson, yes.

CL: Bill Johnson called me from New York because he was then in New York having left the executive director of CRH and gone to New York for the United Church of Christ and I think was working either an AIDS ministry or whatever. In any case, it was too early. It might have been AIDS. In any case he called me on the phone and he said, Chuck I wanted to know if you are going to go to the national march on Washington because there is going to be a national press conference and if you are going to be there I want you to speak. And I am thinking.... And its going to be on television. And I'm thinking, Bill I did not intend to be there. But at the moment my family doesn't know that I am gay. And he said, oh, well I thought everybody knew. As Jo Chadwick had said several years earlier, you're the worst kept secret in town. I honestly believe this, Paul, that we really want to be known. But we usually do it with a certain degree of safety because we don't want to be rejected by other people either. So we going along through life dropping bobby pins all over the place and hoping somebody will come along and pick them up. Instead of announcing to the world in an almost angry manner that here I am, God damn it, what are you going to do with me. But I realized at that point that what I had to do that Christmas was to go home and tell my family. And the reason for that was that if I didn't, if I were ever asked again to appear on national television, I would not be free to do so. Because I did not want my sister to be at home and turn on the evening news and there's her brother talking about being gay and gay rights and all the rest. And so that's what I did that Christmas, I went home and told my family and the general response was, so what else is new. We've known for years. What's the problem? Kind of takes the wind out of your sail.

PG: But you still had the bishop.

CL: But my bottom line has always been my freedom and my integrity. Those are the 2 things that I will never give up. So I may not go around announcing to the world that I'm Chuck Lewis and I am gay, but if push comes to shove I'm going to be right there because by integrity and my freedom demand it. And that's why, you see, after having accidentally come out to the whole Dignity convention and to a lot of my friends and all the rest, and then being asked to be on national television I realized that in order to once again get my freedom back, I had to tell my family and that's what I did.

PG: Is it fair to say that you're sense of mission is built on enabling other people.

CL: Yes.

PG: That's why your spiritual energy is centered.

CL: Yes.

PG: That to me would explain why you are very interested in young people.

CL: Sure.

PG: So in trying to nip problems in the bud, because its hard to find, maybe I'm wrong, but an adult, you can teach any old dog any new trick I think. If you really work hard enough and they are willing enough. But its harder sometimes with older people whose life has to be so damaged.

CL: Definitely. One of the highest suicide rates is in teenagers and those individuals who are struggling with their sexuality. One of the chief sources of blame for that as far as I am concerned is the church. Because the church has a history of teaching people that there is only one way. And if you are not that way, straight, that you are going to go the hell, that you risk eternal damnation, that you will be rejected by the church, by your parents, by the military, by everybody so you must be straight. And the damage that that does to people as they grow up is extraordinary. That's why I am going to be in charge of a cocktail part at our assembly again this year. Because that's where people will come. And to meet people.

PG: It also makes sense to me why you felt that what you were doing is general civil rights work too, because you're gay you have a personal interest or stake in gay civil rights, but as a minister you are just interested in as you said that all human beings have freedom and integrity.

CL: Right.

PG: So women come along you jump on board.

CL: That's right. Sure.

PG: So in so is just civil right all that is just part of doing the thing for you.

CL: You do have to chose you're priorities only because you can't be involved in all the movements, but, you mean as a full time kind of thing. So I have always been involved with Lutheran's Concerned. I am part of the network which is a group mostly about straight clergy in the ELCA who were pushing for ordination of gay men and lesbians even in covenanted relationships. But at the same time you see it's the kind of thing that on Night Ministry when there were a group of women that were down at the Plumbers Union and they were picketing outside hoping the get Plumbers Union to open up their roles to them and they were afraid of being attacked one night, I went down and marched with them In clerical collar to let them know that I was there too. But it is still people like Phyllis and Dell who have been much more involved from things like Take Back the Night, where women have marched, primarily women have marched, to take back the night so that if they aren't raped or attacked on the street or what have you.

PG: So that one event that you talked about where you said you brought your collar, you went in minister drag.

CL: Yeah.

PG: So that's to the Plumber's strike.

CL: Right.

PG: To sort of circle back to something we were talking about earlier, do you think that was basically the primary function of CRH. Often for ministers just to show up with gay people and say, they're okay. Even in a way that's sort of because that does change the dynamic and perception.

CL: That's right. I'm just going back to old files that Don Stewart had and men who have written. Seminarians who wrote letters to him back in the '60s, earlier '70s, and how they said we tried to get a Night Ministry started here in, I don't know, some little town in Georgia. When I put on my clerical collar and went into a bar and I was castigated there, do you think this is a proper way to go about it. And I don't know what Don's answer was when he wrote back but I would assume it was yes because it's a way of identifying yourself. That the church is present with and for people where they are and is not saying to people we will only be for you if you come over here and be with us and then we will be for you. And so that's what Night Ministry has been. That we have taken off them the anger and hostility of many people who have been harmed by the church in the past. And part of our role was to sit and to listen and to absorb that anger until it could be quieted and redirected again, in a more positive way.

PG: And when you are talking about this anger, this is not just doing sexuality, this is other things as well.

CL: Oppression in general. Like the first time I think that Don went to Maud's, he was looked upon like "what the hell are you doing here." And he sat down and ordered a drink and he was served and a woman came in, she saw him there and she let that son of a bitch have it. She just read his beads up and down. And stalked off and went off to another corner. And he just sat there and some other women came over and he talked with them and listened to them and finally this woman came back after about an hour and apologized. And then conversation was carried on and the person, the bartender, whoever it was, said that yes come back again, you're welcome here. That was at a time when men were not, they were not exactly welcomed there, but primarily because women had carved out a space for themselves that they could not have. And they carved it out not as lesbians necessarily but as women. Women first and then because they were lesbians. To have other men now come in and usurp their space that they have finally been able to carve out for themselves was antagonizing. At least that's my perception. And so, but to allow him to come in, he still represented something beyond just a man who was coming in and invading their space. He was also a compassionate voice from a

different side of the church than people had seen before. So the Night Ministry goes everywhere.

PG: I was going to ask you, in the '60s when you were dealing with the Night Ministry, what were the problems on the street. That's not a follow-up question. As you walked about the City what did you basically see in the '60s? What were the things that you were doing? And has that really change over time, essentially?

CL: Well, yes, it has changed because what happened with Night Ministry is we have kind of gone with the flow. The City is dynamic, its organic. It's a living being. It's constantly changing and evolving. When we first came we hung out to a large extent in the Tenderloin because that's where there were people 24 hours a day. But that's also where the young gay kids who were struggling with their identity were on the streets and why CRH got started in the first place. And so every once in a while there would be an itinerant minister that would come to town. This probably happened about 2 to 3 years after Night Ministry started and what happened was this itinerant minister came to town and all of a sudden people were coming up to Don in the street and saying, "you're not one of those guys are you." What guys. Well there was this other guy down here, he said he was a night minister too. And I don't know what he is doing down here. And finally Don talked to a kid and the kid says you don't who those guys are. I don't know what you mean. He said well the last guy that was here he stuck his tongue so far down my throat I almost gagged. Don said, no, I'm not one of those guys. And so there was a period for a couple of months when we just stayed out of the Tenderloin, just give the place time to calm down because this itinerant minister had come to town. He was picking kids up off the street, taking them back to his apartment, giving them a quick, one week course in bible study and sending them out on the street as night ministers to bring more kids back to him. And of course the sexual relations that were taking place were all part of the game. But the kids on the street, many of them were confused about their sexuality and they were looking to someone who would help them decide who or what they were and he was taking advantage of it. Well finally that whole thing got calmed down and they eating it. People on the street were able to sort out who was legitimate and who was not. And the Night Ministry was again involved in the street. When the community, as I said for a while Don was hanging out in the Haight Ashbury and that became part of the Summer of Love. And then as hard drugs and that sort of thing came in.... I ought to share with you the fact sheet that I wrote up here a number of year ago for Night Ministry which details historically the different problems that we went through.

PG: Fabulous, yes fabulous. I'd love that. If you wouldn't mind is give it to the archives, it would be just....

CL: Oh, okay.

PG: See this kind of stuff is useful, just like these letters, you have fact sheet. I mean I don't want to be pushy but these are the kinds of things that we salivate over because there it is.

CL: That's what Night Ministry when AIDS came along. You see the Night Ministry came along, the Night Ministry was one of the first people to be involved. And the reason for that was, the first cases were diagnosed in mid-June of 1981 by the fall, there were people in the bars here that were looking at me and said what the hell are you guys doing about this stuff; I'm dying. We want to know where the church is. By the following February, less than a year later we had our first training session for our volunteers who answered the phone as to how to answer the questions that gay people were going to be phoning in. Like can I get AIDS from a drinking glass, what if I get _____? inside, will I get AIDS. What is AIDS, what will happen to me. Am I going to die if I get it. Etcetera and so on. And we had our first training session for our volunteers less than a year after it was first discovered to equip them as to how to handle the phone calls and for the Night Ministers who were going to be on the street. And realize that the most important thing that you could do is when somebody says that they had AIDS was at some point was to touch them and say its okay. Just to touch them. And do it, being perfectly sure that you are not going get AIDS that way, but the other side is that they feel that they are not a leper, either. That its okay to touch me. And to hold me. And that sort of thing. Let me get that fact sheet for you while I am still thinking about it.

[Pause]

PG: People like Lois Beebe (?) and Rick Stokes said they would get in small groups. What you were just mentioning now made me think of that. This is something that's impressed me a lot. Elliott Blackstone did this to educate the police department, CRH did this educate ministers and as you said, professionals of all stripes. SIR often did this in sort of outreach programs as well. To maximize one on one contact with people who are willing to be openly gay. I know early on Hal Call and Don Lucas did this to the Mattachine Society, but they were basically Atlas carrying the earth. Very few people willing to do that. What happened in the mid-'60s was that there began to be a quote-unquote "explosion of people" willing go out and be publicly identified. This thing over AIDS, the touching somebody. To do so with the Night Minister, that you did as Night Ministers was, I think a lot of this was important in this period because a lot of people coming out of the closet and just going, seeking out people and saying we want to talk to you, not waiting for you to come talk to us.

CL: There were several other things that were happening within the Lutheran Church here. There were two matrixes that were held. Which again focused on human sexuality and especially on homosexuality. And I've got files in here on those. There's also a report about CRH that I made probably, which is printed, I don't know if you've seen that or not. I just ran across and made a copy of it here. I'm trying to think, '69, yeah probably about '69 is when I wrote that report. It was called the *Etiology of CRH*. So that would give you some of the early history and where at that point I thought it should go and that sort of thing.

PG: I just wanted to ask you again about Tenderloin, I wanted to ask you about Guy Straight. Asking about the SIR center, more about, I know you said you were there, you blessed it. You were there for the invocation. But I just wanted to ask you about being at

the SIR center and the drag shows. And specifically because you had talked about appearing as a minister with a collar and how important that was. I wanted to talk to you at this time because this becomes a big issues at this time in homophile movement. About how to appear when you went in public. I know that was a raging debate about the drag queens. This was the beginning of the court system. Where drag queens began to declare themselves basically community leaders acting in their very campy way. Camp started out as a joke but starts very quickly to mean something, I think pretty quickly. And also the leather scene was getting going. I think those two, the drag and leather. It's very hard to, you have to be pretty much blind to stumble by and not get it. In some way. You know what I'm getting at? They were very early, clear statements of being queer. I'm queer, I'm here, what are you going to do about it. I want to think that But then there were big raging debates within the community about public....

CL: My whole theology is revealing on that debate because the term "homosexual" was the term. Before that the term was "homo" it was 'fairy" it was, the word "queer" wasn't used quite so much. But in the early history it was the Council on Religion and the Homosexual. But within about 2 years the debate started saying, homosexual does not define who we are. Because it put the focus in the wrong place, on sex. That the homosexual means that we have sex all the time. And so the word "homophile" then came into usage from *phileas* (sp?) the Greek word meaning friends. Well there are three different kinds of love, one is *phileas*, which is the love of two friends, *eros*, which is sexual love and *agape*, which the love of God. And so "homophile" became the term that could take the pressure off, when you present yourself to the straight world people don't think of sex all the time. But that never really caught on. And so it was talk about the homophile community. And that was talked about 2, 3, 4 years at the most and then it fell into disusage.

PG: Yeah, and then gay liberation came along.

CL: And queer became the word. I'm queer and I'm here. And Act-Up. And even so, what was it, the Gay, Lesbian, Transgender Pride Parade that was here 2 years ago, 3 yeas ago at the most used the word "queer" in the title. There was an uproar in the gay community. And this was a step backward. "I am not queer." I am a homosexual or I'm gay, but I'm not queer. And yet you can understand how this was a way of certain members taking back this pejorative word and turning it back on the community. Which is in a sense what the black community by saying that I'm black. But then that gradually transformed itself into Afro-American and now the current term is African-American. The word nigger is still used but only in the black community. And every black knows, or every African American knows what a nigger is. But it's a word only they can use because when they say nigger that means a black, it's a pejorative term that they can use against themselves when they run across somebody that is African-American but is abusing their own community: he's a no good nigger. But nobody else dare use that term.

PG: I think gay men are like that in that they, when they get together they like to "camp it up." Assume effeminate mannerisms, whether gesture or voices, you know camp it up:

girl friend. But if a straight person were to do that, it would be seen as intolerably insulting.

CL: That's right, yeah.

PG: And the last thing I'll ask you about this Sunday that's really intrigued me. Because it's something again that makes this shift between suddenly professionals began to come out of the closet. Or began, there began to be an environment created which later became more easier and easier, more and more relaxed. With the designation of the Tenderloin under the poverty program, as a poverty program area in '67, which I think was important because it began to feed into City services, federal monies. Which I think was a big deal, especially because it had initially been ignored. I talked to, people who keyed my into this have been Elliott Blackstone and Don Lucas and I need to go back and re-interview Herb Donaldson, I think he was involved in this as well. And because this was also sort of your "beat." I'd be interested in talking to you about "central city." Meaning, I know you already talked about the neighborhood, but I would like to talk to you some more about what you think happened to the neighborhood in '67. It got designated as a program and groups began to organize. There was COG, there was SIR down there. You know what I'm getting at, right?

CL: One of the things that happened is that Moscone Center was built. Here you had suddenly this whole area south of Market which was primarily the habitat of alcoholics, poor, people on drugs. And suddenly they were displaced. And they were displaced and north of Market, into the Tenderloin, initially. Since that time, many of those people have now swept out and around the corner into the Mission District around 14th to 16th Streets. Now there's still South of Market too. But they moved South of Market into the Tenderloin and out of the Tenderloin into that area of Mission Street and the Tenderloin has become increasingly Southeast Asian.

PG: Yes. Vietnamese. Huge Vietnamese community. Also I think it's interesting....

CL: The way Night Ministry knew this was walking the streets. All of a sudden I was walking the streets one night and I looked up and I said, wait a minute I'm missing something here. There are no Southeast Asians on the streets, but the community has changed. And it wasn't the fact.... Say you had a Vietnamese restaurant. Big deal you can find a Vietnamese restaurant over in the Mission District in the Filipino community, you can find other things. But all of a sudden there's a Vietnamese hairdresser, there's a Vietnamese meat market, a real estate agent, a doctor's office. And you say, or I say, the people that use those services live here. The community has changed. And that was right up Leavenworth Street. Suddenly Leavenworth Street was transformed into all of these areas. And then the little streets ran off....

PG: Was that in the '80s or the '90s?

CL: That started I think back in the '80s, late '80s, yep.

PG: Okay, because I know that on Market, the transformation of part of the Tenderloin is that the old SIR center is the Filipino center.

CL: Okay.

PG: And that to me is a little bit of history in and of itself for that area.

CL: The International Hotel here in the City used to be the Filipino center. And when it was torn down those people were disbursed and some ended up South of Market there at where you're talking about. Many others ended up at Daly City and so there's a large Filipino community in that area.

PG: Little Manila.

CL: Yeah. But here, it right here just of Chinatown and centered in the International Hotel.

PG: Huh. Don Lucas told me also that in the mid-'60s or during this time, that there was also a black population in the Central City area but then there was the poor of the poor.

CL: Okay.

PG: And that he felt, his reading of this was that the Chinatown, Mission, Hunter's Point and Western Addition were initially designated as the 4 poverty program areas and that Hunter's Point and Western Addition it was a matter of not increasing the pie, but that was the pie. They split it 4 ways. To bring in Central City was to cut it 5 ways. So there was resistance. Part of the resistance was that, Elliott Blackstone argued that it wasn't initially designated a poverty area despite all of the prostitution and everything because it was white mostly and a lot of gay people, so it was overlooked. Right. Another reason it was overlooked, Don Lucas argued, was that the black population there was so poor that the other black populations in the 2 area basically didn't want to have anything to do with them. In a way they wanted to say this is our money we're not going to give it to you. That was his reading. And then he also said that there was this Filipino population that was sort of just there. That again was.... There was a lot of transgender down there at that time.

CL: Oh, yeah.

PG: So it seems to me there was a strange amalgamation of very disparate groups.

CL: There was no one group that had any power. If you take the Western Addition. The Western Addition had the Japanese community, which was wiped out in the second world war. And that whole area was black. So you had a large area of black population, the same was true with Hunter's Point. But in the Tenderloin, yes there were the poor and the poor blacks, but the transgender and the young gay community, the Filipino

community and they were all microcosms all in together there. And so there was no.... The only label that you could put on it might be poor, but you couldn't put a label of "black poor" because there weren't enough of them. And so there were no power systems that were operating then. We could get a power system together for the Western Addition.

PG: Is it fair to say, though, that the fact that by '67 it was designated a poverty area. And the fact that one of the groups in the mix were the gays, the gay hustlers. But the SIR center was also down there, so it was also kind, at that time it was the flagship of the gay community. Is it fair to say that this program also helped an emerging gay community think of itself as a community by giving us Great Society civil rights. We're going to get together and we can get government money, we can think of ourselves as a civil rights.... In other words I guess it's another way of them think of themselves as a civil rights minority.

CL: I don't think that.... If it got designated as a poverty center it probably happened because there were power groups like the Glide Foundation that would have been involved in doing that. And they may have aligned themselves with, I don't know what other foundations or whatever they were. But it didn't come from the people.

PG: Okay.

CL: As far as I know.

PG: Okay.

CL: It wasn't a grass roots thing that came up out of the people. There were agencies that said lets get together and do this. But the agencies did it, not the people. That would be my perspective on it.

PG: That's fine. Because what I'm also interested in is that....

CL: And like this coalition of the urban specialists. What is it, not COCU, but it was Coalition of....

PG: CUCU?

CL: Coalition of Urban Specialists, SPUR.

PG: Oh, okay.

CL: SPUR, urban, something like that. That would have been one of the groups that was involved. Glide Foundation, SPUR and others. Agencies that got it declared, but not the people saying, hey, we want to be declared.

PG: Okay. Do you think though that some of these agencies went in to help, try to help organize these groups just so that they could have more....

CL: Yeah, sure. I think that's true.

PG: I was trying to, I'm fascinated by this period because today we take so much for granted in the sense that the gay community is sort of classic memory in the American sense, right. I mean we've got a neighborhood, we send our politicians to City Hall. We do this sort of evolved like a classic immigrant ethnicity, but we're kind like a post modern trend in a way. But a lot of, I'm convinced that a lot of what we not take for natural was really sort of being formed, incubated, in the early '60s. Incubated a little bit earlier, starting in the '40s and '50s, but it began to hatch in the '60s. And that's, if you think of like a little duck being imprinted. There were all these Great Society programs around. I'm wondering whether the Central City coming into these agencies was part of telling people, because they're trying to learn to organize. But I don't want to make it that simple. It's a very complex process but I want to piece it together.

CL: See one of the things we were trying to do is to transform the Tenderloin into an acceptable part of San Francisco. And Central Towers that was built was to be like the model for other apartment buildings like that to be built in the area. It never happened. Central Towers was built as sort of a middle class white enclave. And that was it. Nothing else was ever built after that. And then with Moscone Center coming down and they tore out all that. The law suits that stopped the thing dead in its tracks and said unless you make residences available North of Market in the Tenderloin, this project is going to go nowhere. And it stopped Moscone Center dead in its track for at least 2 to 4 years. And then the law suits were settled and at least 5 residences, the Marlboro, the Ansonia, these were hotels in downtown, in the Tenderloin, that were designated as senior hotels to absorb the seniors that were being kicked out of South of Market. So there were 5 major hotels in the area that was all part of that law suit that was worked out and after that was done, then Moscone went ahead. But in the meantime, that was also transforming the Tenderloin. Because now, suddenly, you had a whole group of seniors that were in the area and those hotels are still there, but gradually, I am sure, they will become more Southeast Asian as that pressure comes in.

PG: Right. Well, I'm going to stop it here.

CL: I mean I'm getting saturated.

[End of video II]

[Video III, July 10, 1997 (cassette tape No. IV)]

CL: ...As that pressure comes in.

PG: Right. Well.

CL: I mean I'm getting saturated.

PG: The flashing red light.

CL: Right. Excellent.

PG: Okay. We have been talking about, you told me all about the Night Ministry. And we were talking about CRH and you told me about CRH symposiums. You told me about the founding of the Night Ministry. And you also talked about way on the last couple of tapes. You'd also talked about how it got started, what you'd done through the different '60s, and '70s and '80s what the focus had been, how the Night Ministry had shifted around the City following basically the kids or the people you were supposed to minister to. They started out mostly in the Central City went over to Haight, so on and so forth. Pioneered AIDS, AIDS Hotline and AIDS services. You talked about the need to touch.

CL: I just finished going through some of the old files of the early history of the Night Ministry again. One of the things I rediscovered is the fact that in the beginning one of the things that was really happening is that a number of Night Ministries were being started or attempted to be started all around the country. And so in Don Stewart's records, he has all kinds of letters saying I'm in Athens, Ohio, how do I get a night ministry started back here. And he would reply to that in letters that he had. There must be at least, I don't know, 15, 20 cities that had kind of erupted during that point. Now most of those have all disappeared. It was a flash in the pan and that was the end of it. The other thing is, the number of runaways that people wrote to Don about, and said my son or my daughter is lost in San Francisco. Or I gave them money, they left home and they went to San Francisco, we haven't heard from them for 3 months, can you locate them, just to let me know. So the whole runaway thing during the 1960s, I think approaching the Summer of Love and then beyond to Summer of Love was another emphasis of Night Ministry during that period. My thing was kind of sketchy during that period because I was only working 2 nights a week and Don was working the other 5 nights. So he had a lot more contact and also because he was the Night Minister then. What that amounted to was that he got the correspondence and I didn't during that period. That was kind of interesting, another emphasis that happened back then.

PG: Yeah, I wanted to talk to you actually about that. Why don't we just skip me reviewing thing and go right to the heart of it. Tell me about the runaways. I know you said you were only there 2 nights a week. And I guess I'd like you to initially to focus as much as you can on the early days and then you are free to take it to wherever you'd like to. But what do you remember about the runaways. I guess the specific for historical reasons I'd like you if you can just, even though it's anecdotal to break down their race, their possible class background. How many men, how many boys, how many girls. How many of them were questioning youth or knew they were gay. How many had been kicked out of the house, how many couldn't go back. How did they relate to the police department. I guess, I'm trying to set up.....

CL: I can't answer all those questions because we didn't keep accurate statistics in those categories. I would say that almost, or I would say 90 percent were white. When a kid would come to town they came for all kinds of reasons. Sexual abuse at home, discovering that they were gay, and usually kids like that ended up in a specific area of the City where they were hustling. Later on, for example, in the beginning immediately downtown in the Tenderloin. And then later on in lower Polk Street. The kids that were just kind of set up by society, they're the ones that kind of went to the Haight Ashbury. But it was the Summer of Love and anything went. So they were experimenting with their sexuality in all different ways and fashions. The thing about kids coming to the City though, trying to locate a particular young person was almost impossible. The police are not going to go looking for a particular individual. In the first place there's no way they can do it. And the Night Ministry wasn't able to do that either. Salvation Army did have a kind of missing person's bureau but it was pretty local. The kind of thing that would happen is we might get St. Anthony's Dining Hall to put a notice on the bulletin board saying if John Jones stops by, please contact your parents. But other than that it was almost impossible to locate any young person on the street. In the first place they'd want to remain anonymous. That's why they were here. If they had broken ties with their parents they didn't want to go back. So we were able to do probably very little in terms of actually finding an individual. Where the Night Ministry came in was specifically in being there for individuals and being with them on the street so that if they decided they wanted to go back home, then we could help them make contact with their parents or we could get them into Huckleberry House or into Hospitality House, which was developing during that period and maybe get them stabilized if they decided they wanted to stay or to get through that agency then to make contact with their parents.

PG: Can you tell me more about the founding of the Hospitality House. Don Lucas seems to remember they started in the Tenderloin area and Huckleberry came later.

CL: That's true, yes. Hospitality House started in the Tenderloin on Leavenworth Street, right where it is today as far as I know. And they have a couple of other residences nearby today. But it was a drop in center and housed about 80 men on the 2nd floor, or 80 young people. Huckleberry House was, I think the difference was that Hospitality House housed more people that were just over the age of 18 that, and Huckleberry House worked with the kids who were under 18. The thing about Huckleberry House, it operated, when I remember it, out in the Richmond District and they had a house there and they could take care of about 8 to 10 young people and the rules were you could come there and you could stay for no more than like 2 days. During that 2 day period you had to make contact with your parents. If after 2 days you refused to make contact with your parents you had to leave. I think that was kind of an extension of the Coleman Foundation. Children and Youth Foundation.

PG: Can you tell me about that foundation?

CL: Oh, I have some literature around here, I may still have about it. I'll have to dig for you, which I can do. But I can't do it right now.

PG: What do you remember, just off the top of your head?

CL: What they attempted to do was put together a, I think it was a 3-pronged program and one was Huckleberry House which was a short term housing unit where you had to contact your parents, and if your parents would give you permission to stay then you could stay like an extra couple of weeks during which time they would help you get stabilized, help you to find an apartment of your own. Maybe try to get you back into the school system or what have you. They might also create a reunion between the parents and the youth who was there and have face-to-face conversations with them to try to deal with whatever problems that there were. A second one was a long term housing, it seems to me that was called the Greenhouse, if I remember. The third prong, I think eventually became Larkin Street Youth Center. And these three, these were three different ways of trying to reach young people.

PG: Did your different work?

CL: No, let me back up. It was the Diamond Street Youth Center, not Huckleberry House that was the 3-pronged. Diamond Street, Larkin Street and the Greenhouse. Huckleberry was completely different. It had nothing to do with that. That's right, it was a separate organization.

PG: Where was the Greenhouse?

CL: I don't know. I was never there.

PG: Do you know where, Diamond Street was on Diamond Street.

CL: Originally.

PG: Originally.

CL: It started out on Diamond Street in the Castro area and then it moved over to Central and it now called the Diamond Youth Center. But the original name was the Diamond Street Youth Center because it was on Diamond Street. I want to check my files and see what I can come up for you.

PG: And the Coleman Foundation was just....

CL: It's still in existence.

PG: ...A philanthropic foundation?

CL: No, it was a, as far as I know it was just a nonprofit organization. It may have had some foundation money to start with. Why don't you shut your camera off for a minute and I'll see what I can find.

[Pause]

PG: Were these, while you're looking there, were the founding of these kinds of hospitality houses, which I guess today we always call them shelters, right? I don't know what you call them.

CL: Well Hospitality House was originally a drop in center. It wasn't a shelter. The shelter opened up a number of years later, if I remember correctly.

PG: How would you define the difference?

CL: A drop in center happens either during the day or early evening hours. For example, Larkin Street was a drop in center. And they may provide various programs on site or they would provide just a place for kids to just come and sit.

PG: A shelter is where there were beds overnight?

CL: Right.

PG: Again, was this new, was this something that was happening.... You said the Night Ministry, Don got all these letters.

CL: Right.

PG: So it was kind of, there was something in the air at that time but it took in San Francisco like it didn't take elsewhere. Is that true also of hospitality houses or this beginning of youth shelters, youth service centers?

CL: Probably, because one of the things that seemed to happen during the '60s is a migration of young people back and forth across the country. I think it was a dissatisfaction with society in general. The Vietnam War was on, I have information in here about conscientious objectors that both Don and I counseled. But my records would be with the North Beach Mission at the time. Don has several statements in here from conscientious objectors that he counseled and that he encouraged to write a basic statement and then he wrote letters that they could take with them to their draft board to be registered as a conscientious objector. Just general unrest of young people. They, I think the 1950s where everything was so perfect. The model homes, the development of Levittown if you want. And 2 kids in the family, the dog and the cat and 2 parents, the nuclear family concept. And then this just blew up when the '60s came along.

PG: Melt down.

CL: Yeah. Big melt down. And so the kids that came here came for all kinds of reasons. I think they came for simple affection. Community, which they were not finding at home. And in the process of that, they got caught up in the drug culture, which was part of that. For example if you are going to do heroin you're going to find yourself

a needle and you're going to find yourself a contact and you're going shoot up by yourself. If you're going to smoke marijuana, that's totally different. That's something that we gather together and we pass the joint around. It was a communal kind of thing that happened. The crazy thing is, when was it, in the '80s, I went back, I got a call to go out to the Haight Ashbury to pick up a young person out there and find housing for them. I went out there and I thought, whoa, this is time warp. The living room of this upstairs apartment on Haight Street, there were about 8 young people sitting around. And then there was this little closet that had been turned into a kind of desk where kids could drop in and they had to register there or what-have-you. As I went to pick up these young people I looked in this living room and saw these 8 people sitting around. There was a young person there with a guitar and they were all singing *Blowing in the Wind*. Whoa, what happened, where are we?

PG: This was 1964?

CL: All over again. It was this huge time warp. Don't see here. Here's Las Vegas strip. Here's another news release about a Waikiki ministry that was started. A letter from a Midler Lancaster seminary, he wants to start something in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I am looking for, you've seen the Tenderloin Report, is that right?

PG: No.

CL: That's what I was looking for.

PG: When was that written? Sixties?

CL: Mmhuh.

PG: I am getting all hot and bothered looking at your files.

CL: I can tell.

PG: Chuck, you don't remember who, who ____? _____. Which people were the primary impetus behind establishing these new youth centers.

CL: Well, if I can find, I'm looking for a white.... I know what I'm looking for but I.... "Berkeley suggested that I turn to you for help in locating my friend, so and so who has been missing from his address since the 4th week of July.

PG: That was August, '69.

CL: Yeah. But during that whole period in there....

PG: Were there many women on the street there in that area or was it mostly boys?

CL: Mostly boys. There were some young women but invariably the young women that came to town were all, they got picked up by Johns. So the kind of thing that I used to tell a young women when I would see her is simple, if you want to stay in town the truth is that you will end up either dealing drugs or becoming a prostitute those are really the only choices.

PG: Did that happen also mostly for you young boys?

CL: Yes.

PG: Did you know Jean Berat? (sp?) He published Vanguard Magazine. What do you remember of him?

CL: Probably not a great deal, except that he did publish it. I ran across a picture that showed Ray Broshears carrying a rifle. There's a lot of pictures in here. Scenes from the San Francisco area since the first of March, 1969. Shown is a '67 photograph.

PG: But you don't have much memory Jean Berat?

CL: No. I can't say that I do.

PG: Do you remember Guy Straight?

CL: Oh yes.

PG: What do you remember about him?

CL: Well, the pictures that I took of the California Hall incident I gave to Guy and he published them in *Citizen's News*, the ones that were published. After that, Guy was arrested and did prison time for sex with minors. And he was in prison for at least 4 years or more and then came back to the City and died here in the City.

PG: So that kind of spelled the end of *Citizen's News* for awhile.

CL: Yes.

PG: What was he doing down in that area? Did he have a publishing house?

CL: No, he published a newsletter. It was like a newsletter.

PG: He would pick up boys and take care of them, wouldn't he?

CL: Well yes, in more ways than one.

PG: He was a pornographer too, wasn't he?

CL: Yes.

PG: What kind of man was he?

CL: He was a kind man.

PG: Tell us, Don Lucas says he remembers at the beginning of the Summer of Love that Guy would go over and make sandwiches and hand them out in the Haight.

CL: That's right. I don't necessarily remember that, but that would sound like Guy. Yeah.

PG: Do you remember other things he did that were like that?

CL: No, because as I say my contact with him was probably through CRH.

PG: Its okay.

CL: Let me just get a couple more.... Coleman Children and Youth Services.

PG: Okay.

CL: Nineteen-seventy five. "On August 1, 1974 the Coleman Children and Youth Services was formed to plan, facilitate and develop services for the dependent, neglected and abused children of San Francisco." This is a progress report from them.

PG: But Hospitality House was formed in the early '60s, right

CL: Yes.

PG: So the things that you talked about, the Greenhouse....

CL: That was after this.

PG: That would have been '74 maybe.

CL: That would be '76, '77.

PG: Okay. But Huckleberry House was already up and operating in the '60s, wasn't it?

CL: Yes.

PG: Don Lucas said it was raided and the woman was charged abetting the delinquency of minors.

CL: Possible.

PG: Elliott Blackstone said at that time if youth were picked up they sort of held. Jailed I guess is too strong of a term, but they were held until their parents would either come pick them up or they were sent home.

CL: Okay.

PG: And Don was saying that the problem was he went into the Tenderloin like other people and was talking to these kids, meeting them at Hospitality House and so on and so forth, trying to counsel them to go home and they realized some of them couldn't.

CL: That's right. The problem, I don't think I'm on focus there.

PG: How's that?

CL: I'm not on camera.

PG: Yeah, you're on camera.

CL: Oh, okay.

PG: You're close-up is ready Mr. DeMille.

CL: Okay, no problem. The problem with the kids is they had no place to go. Youth Guidance Center was full. So if they got picked up they either did what Don Lucas said or they would drive the kid around the City and scare the hell out of them and put them off in a different part of the City and tell them to go home; if they ever caught back here in the City again they would really send them home. But they had no place to send them. And later on there was no intake at Youth Guidance Center in the middle of the night. Once you got past like 4 in the afternoon there was no intake. So the only thing the police could do is drive them around, if they wanted to, until the next morning when the intake people would come in. And they couldn't lock the kid up in regular jail because you couldn't mix juveniles with adult prisoners. So they may have some sort of holding place where they could put a kid but they didn't know what to do with them.

PG: And there must have been a real flood of kids around '66 and '67.

CL: Right.

PG: Were you over in the Haight at that time?

CL: Yes.

PG: Can you just recall, what was it like? Really I mean basically, what was it like to be on the street in those days?

CL: Well I think it was better than it is now. Of course one of the things that happened is that when the Summer of Love started happening in the Haight, the Haight, a lot of the gay people lived there. The Castro program, they moved over to the Castro area. And it was fine for a couple of years and then when the hard drugs came in after 1969, the whole place started putting up bars on the windows and gay bars closed out there for the most part. And it became a real tough area. But during that early period the kids were more or less welcome. Here in North Beach when I first came in 1964, there were all kinds of kids living under the bushes on Telegraph Hill. The Last Exit was operating, maybe I mentioned that before, on Broadway. Mike's Pool Hall was another gathering place for them. And then right down here at the corner, I forget what it was called now, but there was a 3rd place that the kids could just hang out. Every once in awhile the police would get all anxious and try to raid one of these places. Which is what happened to Hospitality House. But when they raided it, what are they going to do? What they were trying to do was close it down, not pick up the kids. Because they had no place to put the kids. So what they were trying to do was go after the adults that were running the place and if they could put them in jail they would knock the center out of action for awhile. But all that would did is turn them loose on the street. And after the crackdown came in North Beach in 1965 and 6, that's when North Beach stopped being the center and about a third of the kids went out to the Haight Ashbury and the other two-thirds disappeared, went up and down the coast to various places. For me, as I saw it at the time, that was sort of the beginning of the development of the whole youth movement out in the Haight Ashbury is when they closed it down and the police put pressure on it in North Beach.

PG: So was that a lot of it, sort of that was, the kids out here were probably drawn by the beatnik aura.

CL: Right, which had already ended.

PG: But they would sort of hear, that's what drew them here.

CL: Right.

PG: To drop out in bohemian San Francisco and then the hippies in many ways were just sort of an extension of that.

CL: Right. And you see there were gay bars in North Beach at that time. There aren't any left.

PG: Yeah, that's true.

CL: There is probably one that is mixed, but nobody would call it a gay bar today.

PG: We call it straight central.

CL: Okay. And the Tenderloin, now that's where the prostitution took place. From where Mason hits Market, up to 7th was the old meat rack and also on Turk Street and then when BART came through in '67, that closed out Market Street entirely and that's when the shift gradually began to take to move the whole area of youth prostitution onto lower Polk Street and that's when Polk developed. After that.

PG: Let me go back for a minute. Let's say you have a video camera and its 1967 doing the Night Ministry and you are walking around during the day or night, you're walking around the Haight, what do you see? What is it like to be on the street that year?

CL: This goes back to the question that you asked me before that I never really answered: what's the difference between a kid to be on the street then and the kids that are on the streets now. The ones that are on the street now when I am out there remind me of the '60s, but they also remind me of the burned out cases. While the main drug, you see, was marijuana that mellowed people out. Right now just on today's news it said that a tremendous upsurge of heroin is back again in San Francisco as well as the whole Bay Area. Heroin is not a mellowing out drug. It's a narcotic, it puts you to sleep. And so with marijuana you know you stay awake but you are just kind of happy. And it's a whole different scene. So the kids were at first welcomed and when they came here they had some money. Some parents would give their kids money and say I never want to see you again. Here's \$500.00 do with it what you want. And so they had some money when they came here. They lived together in community. I think today a lot of people who are on the street there is very little in the way of community. So what happens is that they are in isolation. That difference results more in terms of the so-called burned out cases that you see around.

PG: Was it a mob scene that you see on the street during day? There were just so many people at a certain point?

CL: No. The gatherings that take place like on weekends. See locals would come in on the weekends. It wasn't a thriving community with bodies moving up and down the street all the time. Although even Polk Street probably in the '70s there was a lot more street traffic than there is today. Today Polk Street, except for the young hustlers that are there, what happens today if you want to go to a particular bar you go and you park and you go to that bar. Back in the '70s, people would go from bar to bar and they would roam up and down the street. So there was always people roaming on the streets at night. Today almost all the hustlers are on the east side of the street. Very few on the west side. Now how these things happen, I don't know but that's the choice and that's where it is. There must be just as many cars going the other direction but nobody is on the west side of the street, or very few. So that would be the main difference that I would see between the young people that are on the street today and those that were back then.

PG: Did you go to any of the be-ins?

CL: No. I didn't.

PG: Just curious. I want to go back to the Tenderloin for a minute. Again I would like to go back to, start as early as possible as you can. What do you remember about transsexuals and transvestites in the Tenderloin? Did you minister to them, was that part of the Night Ministry as well? Did they, yeah, okay....

CL: The difference was that.... In '64 one of the first things that happened when Night Ministry was just getting started, the first time that Don and I were on the street was the first Sunday night in November of that year. And within 2 weeks contacts had been made in part because the Counsel on Religion and the Homosexual was already forming and I was on that original board, but contacts had been made by the gay community where people went to Don and said very specifically, if you are going to be on the streets here in the Tenderloin you have to know what's happening and we're going to show it to you. And so they took Don and I bar hopping on like 3 successive nights. And they took us to every different kind of place that there was, primarily in the Tenderloin. From Chucker's for example, which was an after hours place for kids. It was so dark in Chucker's that I banged the back of my hand and broke a blood vessel on the back of a chair that I couldn't even see. It was so dark. And then there were stories that were told about a police raid that came in and they would immediately when they knew the police were coming, lights would go up and a horn would sound or a bell or something and when the cops walked in the floor was just covered with pills, because it was uppers and downers primarily that the kids on. That was one type of place. Compton's was another type of place. Compton's is where the drag queens, the transsexuals, transvestites would hang out. But on the streets, to some extent they were bad. What I mean by that the impression you got and I am sure it was not this way but the impression was that here's a guy who put a mop on his head and two balloons under his shirt and a skirt and he was a drag queen. Well it really wasn't like that. But it was not the refinement that has come to the gay scene in terms of the Imperial Counsel for example. Where you have beautiful men who are dressed as women. And there was a certain anger that was connected to it. It was like people saying, like ____?____, it was a way of saying, God damn it, here I am, what are you going to do with me. So there was a certain anger and it was connected with this on street thing.

PG: Do you see, in your mind at that time, drag queens as the same thing as a transsexual?

CL: No, no.

PG: What was the difference?

CL: Well, the whole thing keeps changing. But basically a transsexual is an individual who understands themselves to be of the opposite sex. And they may or may not have had an operation to change their sex. Most transvestites are straight. At least 80 percent of them, just off the top of my head, are straight. But they get a sexual turn on by dressing in clothing of the opposite person. They don't want to be operated on, they don't want to change their sex or anything like that. They may go to the financial district and work as a man all day long. They can come home and get into women's clothes and

fix dinner. Drag queen is an individual who does it for almost like a performance. Most drag queens are not in drag at all except when they are going to be out and about or when it's an imperial or a royal function. Or if they are raising money. They will dress in drag. But ordinarily, they would never get in drag. As one individual said, at one of the early Council on Religion and the Homosexual symposium, it's too much trouble to put on all that makeup. Do you realize how long it takes me to look like this? And that person was sitting or course in full drag. But to put on all that makeup, to adjust the wig, to get just the right appearance, takes time. At least a couple of hours, one said. Probably once you're experienced it doesn't take that long.

PG: And the transsexuals in the Tenderloin, what do you remember of them specifically?

CL: The early transsexuals, the problem there was it was an expensive operation and it was not financed except by one individual that I did know was actually an hermaphrodite and this individual had essentially two complete sets of sex organs. Outwardly if you looked, you say this is a boy. And so she was raised as a boy by her family. But she knew and felt that she was a woman. Later on when she was able to have x-rays done, discovered that she actually had a complete set of female organs inside with the exception of not having a vagina. So she would have her period every month and her period would come out through her penis. I mean it was connected like that. All she had to do was have the male genitalia removed and some form of skin grafting take place to provide a vagina and she could bear children. Now that's an hermaphrodite. And there are various stages of that where an individual may have very tiny male sexual organs or where, or may be producing a large of female hormones as well as having very small male genitalia. There are all kinds of variations in that sexuality. In this particular case, the parents had disowned her because as soon as she came out to them as a woman, they disowned her because she wasn't a woman, she was a man. And they could not accept that fact and so she came here to San Francisco. And she was waiting for an operation to remove the male genitalia at the time that operation cost \$1,500.00. Today we're talking probably \$15 or \$20,000.00. But we're talking back in the 1970s. The individual as far as the City was concerned, as far as general assistance was concerned, this was a cosmetic operation so there were no funds available for it. And so she was on general assistance. And part of the problem there was she external male organs. And so if she went to work, which bathroom does she use. So even if she could pass as a woman, she would still maybe go to the men's bathroom. Well you couldn't have a woman in a men's bathroom. At the same time, if she went to the woman's bathroom and she became suspect of being a man in women's clothing, there was no job there either. So she hadn't been able to get a job. She was on general assistance. And the reason why I met her was that I was taking food to her that night from our pantry that we had at the time. And she was trying to save up enough money to get the operation. And again, they were looking on her more as being a transsexual rather than an hermaphrodite and the result was that the, even for a transsexual at the time, you were required to have at least 2 years of psychiatric counseling and to begin to take sex hormones and at the end of the 2 years if you could successfully pass as a woman, then they would at least contemplate doing the operation. One of the things they wanted to make sure was, was this just a

matter that you were actually gay and you were denying it and you felt that if you became a woman that everything would be all right. They didn't want to make that mistake because once the operation happened there's no way back. So then the operation would happen and then you were required to have at least 2 more years of psychiatric counseling after that. And it was all part of kind of program that was put together. The transsexuals, transvestites and so on were on the street in the Tenderloin during that early period and hung out primarily in Compton's Restaurant.

PG: And where was that?

CL: That was at the corner of Taylor and Turk.

PG: And that was from the very beginning of the Night Ministry, you remember that Compton's?

CL: Yes.

PG: Do you know how long they had been there? From just the listening.

CL: No. That may have developed several years into Night Ministry. I do remember there was another after, well after hours club, the Chucker's and then there was another spot at the corner of Leavenworth and Turk on the second floor. The northeast corner on the second floor was another after hours club and then of course, Pearls was the other place which is the back room of The Gilded Cage. The Gilded Cage was up on Ellis and, Ellis off Mason, I think.

PG: And these places were all frequented by transsexuals or mostly just...?

CL: No they were not frequented, they were frequented by young people. Under the age of 18.

PG: Okay. Compton's was a transsexual hangout.

CL: Right. And then later on, what was it, there was a bar that specifically catered to cross dressers and transsexuals. The Black Rose, something like that.

PG: Where was it located?

CL: Jones, I think. Between Turk and Eddy. Or Eddy and O'Farrell.

PG: You gave this profile of this woman and basically you said she couldn't get a job for a lot of different reasons. So she was on general assistance. How true that was of the other transsexuals that you knew. How many were on general assistance, how many were prostituting themselves? Because basically they refused, because they felt that they really were women let's say. They just refused to try to conform in their dress but because, as you said there weren't operations. There was kind of therapy at the

beginning at that time. Dr. Benjamin starts in '66. And so can you just talk a little bit about that group of transsexuals? What were they doing, how were they surviving, what was it like for them?

CL: Probably the same way that many are today. There were undoubtedly a few had regular jobs. And I have a personal friend who was married. After they had had a child, he decided that he was a she. And he went to Europe as a man and came back as a woman. Had the operation in Europe. And he and his wife remained together, remained married. Slept in the same bed. It was hard to understand. I never really talked to them about the arrangement but it would undoubtedly be pretty hard for her to understand because it would be like having a lesbian relationship. She was totally straight. And yet the last that I heard from them they were still maintaining this relationship. I think that she had started to date, but they were still married. But now he had money. But once the operation took place, he came back and she worked and she supported him and he stayed pretty much just around the house.

PG: And you're feeling about most transsexual was....

CL: Many of the others, right they are right on the street and they are prostituting because it is a way of surviving and its also a way of getting enough money together for the operation. And some transsexuals do not want the operation. What they want is the hormone treatments and development of the rest of their body that looks and feels like a woman. But they do not want to complete the operation. And they would pass on a day to day, regular basis as a woman and always dress as a woman.

PG: That this place, Compton's, were there any female to male transsexuals. Did you know any of them in the Tenderloin?

CL: No.

PG: It was mostly just men? So the Tenderloin was pretty much a male runaway spot. In the main.

CL: The runaways have always been predominately male. The reason for that Paul is its easier to survive as a male on the streets than it is for a woman. If you're a young woman on the streets, you're going to get caught up in prostitution with a pimp.

PG: A boy doesn't necessarily have a pimp?

CL: A boy doesn't necessarily have a pimp, right.

PG: So he has that kind of freedom on the streets.

CL: He's got more freedom in that respect.

PG: But there were pimps probably, for boys?

CL: On yes. No, there were men who had a stable of boys. Yes. They were at both ends. But a young woman, especially if she were in her early teens she would end up with a pimp, invariably.

PG: A lot of these kids probably died young, I bet.

CL: I'm sure, I'm sure. Or they went back home. And the problem with Night Ministry at that point you see, if a young woman would come to us what I would try to do is frighten her so that she would go back home. At least I did that in the beginning. And then I realized after a very short period of time that if she went back home, she would only go back to the sexual abuse that she had run away from. And now comes the dilemma, do you encourage her to stay here where she will be abused on the street or to go back home where she will be abused by her father, step-father, boy friend, or whoever.

PG: So this why people started social services?

CL: That's right. To help individuals like that that could not or should not go home and at the same time to get them off the streets and out of the hands of the pimps. There was an older woman, probably in her, how old was she, she was 19 or 20. She came to the YMCA Hotel for housing one night and I was not able to help her. The housing we had there available free was all taken. So before I could even begin to suggest alternatives she turned and left. The next night the police called me, they had found this young woman in an ally up off Bush Street crying and would I come and talk with her. So I went up and it turned out to be the same woman. Her story is that she'd come here to the City when she was I think 15 and was on the street and a man said, hey look, you're young come on up to my place and you can stay there tonight, no problems and we'll see if I can help you tomorrow. So she went. Got up there and there were 3 or 4 other guys waiting and they gang raped her [tape losses sound].

PG: Let's start over. This woman was taken up and she was gang raped.

CL: Right. Her story was that she'd come to the City at age 14, 15. Met a man on the street who took her up to his apartment and she was gang raped for 2 or 3 nights. And after that, she knew to which pimp she belonged and he put her out on the street. And I have seen fights on the streets where a man and a woman are walking down the street and the woman is just looking down at the cracks in the sidewalk and totally slumped over and he is lecturing her and swearing up a storm and telling her exactly what she is doing wrong and what she is supposed to do right and even slap her around a bit. And the clerical collar meant nothing, the fact that I was even nearby to observe this. But what had happened is that she had been arrested on numerous occasions and the night before she had just gotten out of jail again with nothing. And so what is she going to do: back to the streets. And at that point she couldn't take it. And so that's when she ended up then crying in the ally. So I was able to put her up for the night. I did not have to tell her what the dangers were, she already knew them. And then was able after that to finally get

some additional help for her the next day and probably a year later she wrote back and thanked me. She had gotten a job and was doing all right as a waitress in a restaurant.

PG: Happy ending, I guess.

CL: Yeah. One of the few that we know about because often what would happen you see the Night Ministry is just a crisis situation and then we never hear from that individual again. Another aspect that was still happening in the early history of the Night Ministry is the USO. I never went there but Don Stewart would go there and to a billiard parlor on Market Street. And those were other places where people hung out. The USO of course lasted into, well the end of the Vietnam War I think, or close to it is when it folded up. And the billiard parlor moved someplace else or closed down. So you were always tapping where do people gather. And how can you be there with them and for them.

PG: Well at this point, some of the places you walked by is the SIR Center, right?

CL: Yes I dedicated the SIR Center.

PG: What do you remember about that?

CL: I always thought that SIR was one of the greatest organizations that ever came along. I was sorry to see it fold. The reason for that was that it was multi-faceted and it didn't matter who you were as a gay person, there was a place for you. And what I mean by that is they had a political action committee, so if you wanted to take a sign and demonstrate some place, there was a place and a way to do that. There were their musical shows that they put on and if you were quiet little person, sort of scared of your shadow, you could stay behind the scenes and you could paint scenery and then you'd be part of the audience that night and you could see you're scene on stage that you had painted. There were recreational activities that were available for just people that wanted to drop in and play a game of pool. There was a religious committee so that if you still had some spiritual connection and you wanted to find a place in the City that would welcome you, that religious committee would know about that. And they had *Vector* their Magazine which they published. So you could write news stories if you had any writing ability. And so they all these variety of activities that attracted a great many people.

PG: What....

[Gap in material between cassettes.]

CL: At the time, you see, the Counsel on Religion and the Homosexual brought together in its original board the heads of most of these organizations. Daughters of Bilitis, Society for Individual Rights, the COITS, Tavern Guild, ...

PG: Mattachine

CL: Mattachine Society and probably Citizen's News. I can't remember now whether Guy was on our original board or not but he might have been. And the result was, all these people that were so competitive with each other and so, always trying to put the other person down. For the first time they were able to sit down around this table in front of a group of clergy and they gave up a lot of that. So when it came time to dedicate the center, I was on the board and the spiritual aspect of a group of people who were part of the center said we ought to have this center dedicated. And because of my connection with CRH they asked me to do it.

PG: What do you remember about that evening?

CL: The night of the dedication?

PG: Yeah. People must have been very excited, right? It was this first sort of gay community center in the states.

CL: Yes, because Mattachine Society and Tavern Guild and some were organizations but they really didn't have a place where people could meet and be. And SIR did. They had their community center on 6th Street. And it was significant enough that I wrote a special service just for the dedication of that community center and still have copies of it somewhere in my archives. One thing I noticed later is that Ron Warren put together a reunion of SIR, what was it, it must have been the 30th anniversary, no 25th anniversary, I guess. And, 25th or 30th.

PG: Eighty-nine.

CL: Yeah that sounds right.

PG: Because it founded in '64.

CL: Eighty-nine sounds about right. And got together as many people as he could. I got out this service that I had written and one thing that I discovered about it is how sexist it was. Using "he" for God throughout the entire thing, which I would not do, I would use "he" in referring to Jesus, but when I refer to God I use the name but I wouldn't now call God "he" throughout the whole service, which is what I did in the original sermon. Which showed again how the feminist movement altered my way of thinking as well as the thinking of many other people.

PG: How many people were there at the dedication?

CL: Oh, I don't know, it must have been a couple of hundred.

PG: People must have been very excited.

CL: I would think so. Yes, I was.

PG: What do you remember about the dances and the celebrity Capades, the show. You talked when I first came in here you mentioned some of that. Feel free to just free associate, if you think of a show, just talk about.

CL: Well, I never hung out at SIR. I dedicated it. My relationship was either a professional one in relationship to it. And I remember on one other occasion there was a meeting in a basement somewhere in that same area. It wasn't in the SIR Center it was across the street. And various organization heads were there and everybody was mad at somebody else and they were just about on the edge of getting into a screaming bitch fight. That's when I spoke. I don't remember what I said, but it was the calming voice that called them back a center to work out their differences. And so that was primarily my relationship with SIR. Plus to attend the various Capades dinners, or not dinners but Capades shows and later on an extension of that with *Mame* and *Hello Dolly* and things like that.

PG: All those shows, people have very fond memories of those shows. The celebrity Capades.

CL: Right. Once again this was the kind of thing, Paul, where there was a place for you. It didn't matter what you're talents were, there was some place where you would fit in to this whole scheme of things. And it was a real "community" center. It brought out a lot of hidden talent that was just floating around.

PG: I was just amazed to hear how ambitious these productions got. How aggressively... I mean it turned into a real Broadway show.

CL: Absolutely.

PG: Very professional.

CL: By the time they moved down, not to Bimbo's but to the club right up the street, I can't think of the name of it right now. But by the time it moved in there *Hello Dolly* had a staircase on stage that came down. It had the waiters with their trays doing their dance out in front. How they got clearance from Broadway to do the show, or whether they ever did or not, I don't know.

PG: People have told me that what you would do is just write and say, Hi, we're from San Francisco and we want to do a production of *Hello Dolly*, we'll pay. You could pay some kind of fee, copyright fee, and then they send you the script, the libretto, the music and stuff. So off you go. Eventually somebody you get a whiff of this all male production of *Mame* or all male production of *Hello Dolly* and then the order would come down, you have to stop. So they would just do it as long as they could. Just not say that it was all male.

CL: Okay.

PG: At one point they even established that, like a theater school, right that was just down, one of the theaters down in the Tenderloin was the Golden, it was the Academy. Jose was involved in that. It got to the point where they had theater for awhile. Do you remember anything about that?

CL: No, I don't recall that.

PG: Okay. The last thing that I wanted to talk to you about was the Court. Did you go to the Beaux Arts Ball when Jose was elected in '65 he was elected Queen of the ball.

CL: Sure, I think we talked about that before. That's the one that was raided.

PG: No that was different. That was the Mardi Gras. That was a New Year's Ball. He was elected in Halloween of that year at the Beaux Arts Ball.

CL: Oh.

PG: The annual Beaux Arts Ball which was held at Winterland.

CL: And that was in what, '64?

PG: Sixty-five. Let me jog your memory here. I've had to sort all this out because it gets confused because things were pretty fast and furious at that time. I actually had to go in, I've heard so many conflicting accounts. So this is what I have been able to sort out. In 1964, to raise money, SIR staged 2 dances, one I believe was in September and the other one was in November and they each had about 500 people that attended and they were in the basement I believe in California Hall. They were by invitation only. And many people have forgotten about this. But there are records. There are actual directors' reports. In October of that year there was the first Beaux Arts Ball, which was held at the Hilton.

CL: In 1964?

PG: Yes. So there were 3 large dances, starting September, October and November. The first Beaux Arts Ball was in October at Halloween and it was at the Hilton and it caused a huge scandal because, it was sort of typical of what they did with *Mame* and *Hello Dolly*, they didn't tell them that it was going to be a drag ball. They just said it was going to be a Halloween ball, suddenly all these men appeared in drag. And there are stories, I don't know how true the stories are. There are stories of dresses getting caught in the escalators and suddenly the men are revealed. The women are revealed to be.... And the management kick them out. It got in the newspaper and on the news. It was, I guess another 10 years before they were invited back to the Hilton.

CL: This was in 1964?

PG: Sixty-four. Then in January 1st of 1965, was the California Hall ball. So that was sort of like a cap of a very exciting sort of half year of first big dances. And all of these dances had basically been....

CL: That's interesting.

PG: The Beaux Arts Ball was at the Hilton but it was again they kind of lied, they didn't lie, they sort of didn't tell them what was going on. And the 2 SIR dances were underground. Lowly and also sort of metaphorically. Now it happened, what was so important about the California Hall ball was that CRH ministers decided to clear it with the police department. So that, what was so special about that ball was it was the first aboveboard ball in which the police had been notified.

CL: Okay, okay.

PG: It was sort of like Tavern Guild picnics which were started very early. Those were again by word of mouth and you got the tickets at a certain bar and nobody knew where it was going to be and you headed out and the people who owned the property didn't know what was going on.

CL: God. I was not aware of those 3 previous dances.

PG: Well I wasn't either. I just got through interviewing and going back and looking at information and re-interviewing people, I found this stuff.

CL: Interesting.

PG: The Beaux Ball was Halloween of 1965 at Winterland.

CL: Jose, you said, was elected Empress at the first....

PG: The second Beaux Arts Ball in '65. He wasn't in San Francisco in 1964, he was at the World's Fair. And I know that for a fact.

CL: He was at the California Hall.

PG: Yes, he had come back for that.

CL: All right. See I thought he was elected that night there. No.

PG: He was elected because there is actually pictures in *Vector*. He was elected at Halloween at the second Beaux Arts Ball.

CL: And not till '65?

PG: Yeah. That's why 2 years ago was the 30th anniversary of the Court. That was the reign of Donna and Bryan.

CL: Yes.

PG: And last year was Steve and Cocketilla. And this year is, right, anyway. But you agree, that's why '95 was the 30th.

CL: Okay, okay.

PG: Let me tell you, I heard so many different versions that I finally marched Jose down into his basement at one point and pulled out records. I went to the archives and looked at *Vectors*. Because that some people insisted so strongly that it was at this date or that date, I began even doubting even written memos. But when something comes up and its in *Vector* of '65 and its very clear, that's the record, right.

CL: Right. What I remember is, as far as I know I was never at a Beaux Arts Ball.

PG: Okay.

CL: But for about the first 3 years at California Hall and the following year the same dance or a dance like that was held at the hotel on Market Street. What was it called. At Market and 10th. And it has a different name today. I am trying to think what it was called back then. In any case it was in their ballroom up on the top. That was the 2nd dance and then the 3rd one, I think I went to the first 3 dances. But they were sponsored by the Tavern Guild and they were an extension of the California Hall dance.

PG: And there are all kinds of arguments about who sponsored that dance, let me tell you. Some people say the Tavern Guild. You talk to people who were in the Tavern Guild, they say it was a Tavern Guild dance. You talk to people from SIR and they say it was a SIR dance. You talk to people from Mattachine, they say it was a Mattachine.

CL: My understanding is that there were 5 organizations that sponsored it.

PG: Yes.

CL: Tavern Guild, SIR, Mattachine, Daughters of Bilitis....

PG: CRH.

CL: It was for CRH.

PG: Oh, that's right.

CL: And I think maybe the Court.

PG: Okay.

CL: But it was to be a benefit for CRH. To help get CRH started financially.

PG: So, okay. What do you think, putting all this historical details aside for the moment, whatever happened, what do you remember about Jose being crowned? Do you remember anything about the contest?

CL: I wasn't there.

PG: Oh, you weren't there, okay.

CL: At the Beaux Arts Ball.

PG: But you seem to remember that you were there.

CL: I thought he was crowned at the California Hall dance.

PG: Did you see him crowned?

CL: No because I was busy taking pictures of the police taking pictures.

PG: That's right, that's right. Okay....

CL: And I somehow in my consciousness I just thought that was where he was crowned. But obviously that's not true.

PG: Yeah. Don't worry, this has been a huge point of confusion for people. I was shocked to find out about those 2 SRI dances.

CL: I had never heard of them. The reason why I was there is that CRH was just in its formative stage and so was Night Ministry.

PG: And so were you just coming out here.

CL: I came in January and it was in June that the Mill Valley conference took place. Don Stewart came in....

PG: September.

CL: Let's see, arrived in August and spent September incognito around the City. Spent October visiting various organizations, riding with an ambulance crew, the police department, etc. And then the first Sunday in November was when we started out together on the streets. Right in that period, probably, it seems to me it was during October or November right after we started is when the gay community came to us and said you've got to go bar hopping with us. It was either October or November. And my

name had been suggested for the original board of CRH, which I was on. I think our first board meeting probably took place in December, early December. And then the dance which was to be a benefit was held that first weekend in January.

PG: Things were very fast and furious at that time.

CL: Yeah.

PG: It got....

CL: See I wasn't really involved in the gay community at all in any way shape or form except to go bar hopping. And I didn't even hear about these dances you talked about.

PG: Doesn't surprise me. How I found out about them when I did the exhibit last year I interviewed Bill Plath. Bill Plath and Bill Beardemphel remembered. And Bill Plath in 1964 confidential report of SIR and he read from it. See, its those kind of documents I trust, because they were written at the time. And another thing that really raised my credibility in this events, that there were indeed 2 SIR dances as well as the first Beaux Arts Ball was that both Bill Plath and Bill Beardemphel have almost identical memories of the first SIR dance. The band started playing and there was a huge rush of people and there was great shout and stuff because it was really the first huge dance. That was organized by gay people for gay people, not kind of people going to some bar or something. They both had a very, very distinct memory and I know that they hadn't talked to each other in a long time.

CL: Okay.

PG: So both the written evidence and this amazing correlation between two separate memories after over 30 years, 32 years, made me think, well it had to have happened. And that's just another piece of, anyone can come here.... This is kind of exciting to uncover all these little pieces, all these little threads.

CL: And you can remind us of the lies we've been telling all these years. Thinking they were the truth.

PG: Its my dirty job.

CL: Somebody's got to do it.

PG: That's a problem, especially with California Hall. I think that year, from September of '64, well, you said the beginning of Mill Valley, that half year right. Let's take just from June of '64 and go a full year around, all the events of '65. Sixty-five was also a very heavily cluttered year in San Francisco with gay events. And you can even go 2 years in to the summer of '66 where there was the national conference in Kansas City in February, the big protest. And then all the gay groups met out here in '66 over the summer, the Ten Days of August. I think there was a picket at the State Fair. I think that

those 2 years, there was so much happening. It was not like any of this was planned. People sort of making it up as they go along, jump in the balls and here is another one. I think that memory is justifiably or understandably

CL: And you add on top of that the whole civil rights movement that was also taking place at the same time. And within a short period of time the peace movement and free speech movement followed very shortly after that by the feminist movement, and it was all just

PG: Kaboom.

CL: Kaboom.

PG: Yeah this is all highly condensed period and so I am not at all amazed that people's memories get a little lost on dates. And I think what happens is that people latch on the big dates like California Hall. Because it really was apparent to everybody that was a key point out here. Anyway, tell me about the Court. When did you become, I know that when I first went to a cemetery, we video taped it, and we have you on video tape. You were the minister in attendance.

CL: Alright, here's, in those early years my relationship with the whole Court system was professional. And what I mean by that was that I would, at the California Hall event and gained a certain stature within the gay community because of my taking pictures, because of my involvement with CRH for 10 years. But after the first 3 dances it was, the way I saw myself in relationship to the gay community at that point was in a professional role. I was there to support the gay community when they needed support. When they didn't need me longer I went elsewhere. But I was only at the first 3 dances. And that 3rd year I think was when Shirley was elected. And Shirley said would you be on my Court and I said, sure. That was the end of my involvement.

PG: What was the trouble?

CL: I can't even remember.

PG: What was it like to be on her Court?

CL: I wasn't on her Court, that's the point. The only involvement I had was to saying "sure" over the phone. And I never attended any meeting of the Court or had anything whatsoever to do with it, I was a man. And they used my name and that was fine. But I was never invited to any of the Court meetings and I never asked about it and never went. And so that was it. And my relationship to the whole gay community was primarily through CRH and not through the Court system. Now, what happened in the last 5 or 6 years here is it began when Marlene decided to give me an award when she was stepping down. So I went to receive the award and that's when, I hadn't been to a coronation or anything throughout that entire period. That was the first coronation that I went to and that got me back into, or got me into really, the whole Court system. And that's only

been like the last 5 or 6 years. And then about 2 years later when Jose asked me to do the Emperor Norton gravesite thing and I did that for 1, 2, 3, the 4th year is when Don and I did it together.

PG: Don Stewart?

CL: No, Don Fox, the new Night Minister.

PG: Oh, okay, okay.

CL: And then last year, of course, he did it by himself.

PG: What did you think of the Court?

CL: Oh. I think, when it functions the way it is supposed to, I think it's a wonderful opportunity for a great many people. From time to time it gets politicized and when that happens it gets distorted. From time to time people come along and take it too seriously. Or it becomes a total ego trip for some people. And again, that kind of distorts it from its original intent which essentially was to have fun, to uphold the gay community before the public, to raise money for all kinds of nonprofit organizations and just to have a good time. And then, as I say, when it gets politicized, usually when that happens is around election time when 1 or more bar people will take over and decide this is going to be my candidate or if a wealthy candidate comes along and tries to sway the election, as has been done in the past. Again, that distorts the whole thing. And there have been really great Empresses that have raised all kinds of money and had a good time doing it and they want everybody else to have a good time. And there have been some that have done nothing or virtually nothing. And there have been others that have had real ego trips. That it was more important for them to play the bitch or however they saw themselves than to really do the job.

PG: What do you remember about the Courts?

CL: The only thing I know about the Courts is that it was a fun and games group. It was total social activity, but they did raise money. And once I remember at one point they made through some activity that they had, they made a contribution to the Night Minister. But they also had this summer event that took place out in the wild someplace and a huge barbeque it was over a weekend. I've seen pictures of it and it looked like everybody came drunk, stayed that way and went home the same way. But everybody had a good time.

PG: Kind of like an extended Tavern Guild picnic.

CL: Right, it was an extended Tavern Guild picnic. It was at the site that apparently the owners knew what it was so there was never any.... They had a cabin and they had this big kitchen and dining area. I think there was a swimming pool there from the pictures I

saw. And people just went to laid back for the weekend. It was primarily a social organization, people having a good time.

PG: I am going to quickly and a final list of things. Just say something. I know that you, I have a feeling that you were very busy with the Night Ministry and with your mission until you didn't have an involvement, but if you have any memory of this, any kind anecdote and little piece of information is helpful. So I am just going to tick things off and you can just tell me what you remember. Citizen's Alert.

CL: Okay, Citizen's Alert, I was a member of that group for 10 years and it started probably, probably 1965. After the California Hall event and when we saw the police activity there and we learned of other events of police harassment and brutality that were taking place, Citizen's Alert was formed to essentially be a clearing house. It was intended to be like the Police Commission with no tolerance. A place where you could go and report the way CUAV is today. Where you could go and report incidents of police harassment and brutality. And so we collected all this information and people were interviewed. Of all the complaints we filed with the police department, there were only, out of several hundred that were filed, there were only probably 8 to 10 that were ever investigated. Of those 8 to 10 there were probably only 2 or 3 that ever got to a stage where there was a complaint filed in their officers' portfolio. And so we realized, it took us 10 years but after 10 years we realized this was not the way to go about it. So it dissolved.

PG: Again, was this one of the first of its kind organizations in the United States of people getting together and sort of having citizens' watchdog organizations over the police department? Or again was it just that this was happening all over the United States at about the same and people kind looking around at each other and saying, hey why don't we do this. They did it over there?

CL: I never heard of it happening anyplace else. So, I can't answer your question exactly. But I never heard of it happening anyplace else.

PG: I'm just getting intrigued.

CL: If it happened, it probably would have happened in New York.

PG: That's what I was thinking.

CL: After Stonewall.

PG: But that's years later.

CL: Not too many years, it was '69.

PG: Okay, did you know anything about the ECHO conferences, back east, hear anything about them. An East Coast Homophile Organizations. Specifically there was

one in the end of '65 that led to the first national conference in Kansas City in February, '66.

CL: Okay, no, I didn't know anything about that. The only one that I was to if I remember correctly was in Washington DC and that was the beginning of a task force on legal, what was it. It was a task force of gay and lesbian legal issues that But I can't remember the name of it now.

PG: Do you remember at all what happened while you were there?

CL: Yes. That had to be about 19....

PG: Sixty-seven, oh this was seventies?

CL: It was 1968.

PG: What you were probably at was at a planning conference by one of the NACHO, North American Conference of Homophile Organizations.

CL: Okay, could be.

PG: I'm guessing. But they did have one in DC in 1967-68.

CL: Okay, that's the one I was at.

PG: Did you go with Dorr Jones? Was he there?

CL: No. A national task force on something.

PG: Okay, I'm sorry, so what happened, you were about to say?

CL: It was a kind of strategizing meeting as to how we could operate nationally and bring together some of the organizations on a national basis. There was a cocktail party that was held one evening at a private home. Long time, I don't remember their names, activists in the gay community.

PG: Kameny. Dr. Frank Kameny?

CL: Yes it was at his home.

PG: He is the one who instigated picketing back east.

CL: Okay. Yeah, that's where it was. The cocktail party was at his home. It was another first back then. There was an attempt to work on a national level to bring together the variety of organizations from around the country and to have some new

? meet in the legal field and in commerce as to how to get the political power foothold in the political community.

PG: How did people cooperate?

CL: To a large extent through exchange of information as to what was happening. Because with all these organization they operated in isolation of each other. Even.... See that's the one great thing that I felt about CRH is that it brought together for the first time these various organizations here in the City. Because up until that point, yes they existed, but they existed over against every other organization in a very competitive way. And so it was self destructive. They were competing for the same people. They were trashing everybody else but themselves and they existed in isolation. In isolation there was no power. So when they finally got together here through CRH and then the attempt at national, there began to be perceived by people that there was power there. And its not, the thing about power is doesn't really matter whether you have it or not. If people perceive that you have it, you've got it. Whether you really have it or not by virtue of a constitution, by virtue of an act of congress, by virtue of a local ordinance, if people perceive you've got power and you use it, you've got it. And that's essentially what happened here in San Francisco in terms of the political scene, is that once SIR came along and started holding these political meetings or going to the supervisors who were up for election and say we want you to be at our meeting. Because we control the gay vote in San Francisco. Are you going to be there. How big is the gay vote? Ten percent of the population. I think that's 60 thousand queers that you have to deal with. They were there. SIR, Tavern Guild, nobody had that kind of power. But it was perceived by the Board of Supervisors that they did. And they would show up. And that's how it got started. And then of course Harvey Milk came along and what have you.

PG: So your feeling is that the conference that you went to in Washington DC was similar in that it brought people to the table?

CL: Right. And it was an exchange of information as to what was happening on the East Coast, what was happening in Washington DC through Frank Kameny, what was happening in Los Angeles with One down there. And this exchange of information and development of certain strategies to prime the pump for example. The get somebody to go to the American Psychological Association to get them to adopt a statement which happened several years later.

PG: Right.

CL: Those are the kinds of things that were to come out of that conference.

PG: Okay. Do you remember anything about the first NACHO conference in Kansas City.

CL: No.

PG: Do you remember anything about the first national protest at the Federal Building on Armed Forces Day? The Armed Forces protest.?

CL: In Washington?

PG: No it was here. Well they were staged simultaneously, I might say national, meaning they were staged simultaneously in about 5 cities, San Francisco by fluke ended up having the largest. We had about 250 people show up, about 50 protesters. Protesters and another group of protesters. That's a whole other story there. That's the front story. I think Bob Cromey, Robert Cromey and Cecil Williams was there, I think Ted McIlvenna as well. They spoke from the flat bed of a truck. Del Martin spoke, Bill Beardemphel spoke.

CL: I don't have any clear recollection.

PG: Do you remember anything about the Ten Days of August. There was the DOB convention, there was a CRH convention and then there was a second national convention out here? And that was held I think at the Jack Tar Hotel.

CL: I think that's right. I remember being there, but I don't have any particular recollections of it.

PG: Okay. Those are just certain events. Like I said this 2 year period, this hump.

CL: You see that was also the same time Paul and I had the parish besides being on CRH and on Citizen's Alert, I was also on the board of Ecumenical House out at State University. And that's where I saw the riots, I happened to be in a meeting when the riots took place. I told you about the cops throwing the kids in the back of the paddy wagon and so on. That was all taking place in that whole arena to.

PG: One last question. This goes back to the establishment of different services. Drug rehab. When did San Francisco people start to say, kids are running away so maybe we should have shelters instead like you said, scaring them and sending them home to more sexual abuse or physical abuse. Lets get them something to eat and maybe let's try to keep them off drugs or help them get off drugs.

CL: The Haight Ashbury Free Clinic was probably one of the first efforts, Fort Help was another effort. And Fort Help, Joel Fort, prior to that was with I think it was Department of Social Services and he tried to get drug rehab programs started there and was frustrated and as a result formed Fort Help and I think that was one of the first Methadone clinics here in the City. Those would be the 2 that I think of in terms of any kind of drug rehab. And then, of course, Coleman's was with the development of Larkin Street. Huckleberry House came along shortly after. It seems to me Huckleberry House was originally a Glide program that Glide got started. If I remember correctly. The Glide Foundation started Huckleberry House.

PG: It seems to me Huckleberry House was separate and Ron Lucas and Elliott Blackstone remembers it being circa sometime 1960s, it was there when Haight Ashbury was going. But the first Hospitality House, the first concept of giving the youth a place to get off the street was in the Tenderloin. Now you said that was Leavenworth. Do you remember where on Leavenworth?

CL: Where it is today.

PG: Which is Leavenworth and...?

CL: Between Golden Gate and Turk.

PG: Okay.

CL: But they now have, around the corner there's a psychedelic painted front. I think they also have that as a shelter. More of a long term shelter. But again, I don't think they can operate with kids under the age of 18 either, even today. The thing about the Diamond Street shelter is that it took us about 2 years through the Coleman's Children's and Youth operation to talk to a juvenile court judge and get his permission to open Diamond Street. Because the juvenile division did not want to let any of its power go.

PG: Wow.

CL: And essentially what the judge was doing is he was saying, its okay for a kid to go to Diamond Street and stay there for 48 hours with no supervision by the court system and no police harassment. And then he put the limits on. But after that then they either have to contact their parents or they have to be, they cannot stay there. See that was the first... But it took 2 years to get a judge's permission to even do that. They would not release that. Up until that point if they tried to open Diamond Street the cops would have raided the place and say you can't house these kids.

PG: Well its time we have to urgently, I am now going to let you go. Now you've sic'd me on all these poor other people. Because I am going to have to go talk now. I'm going to have to make a visit to these youth shelters and start just seeing whose who and arrange some interviews and talk to people.

CL: I haven't heard about Huckleberry House for quite awhile. They moved. They used to be on Judah. And then they moved to another house, it seems to me it was on 7th or 8th Avenue, in the same general area there. And that's the last I heard of them.

PG: That is my exquisite pleasure as an interviewer to dredge the past.

CL: Well you are certainly calling up a few memories for me too. I'll tell you.

PG: Thank you very much.

CL: You're welcome.

[End of recording]